Jim Henson's™

THE STORYTELLER™

Fairies

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TELLER™ Fairies

The Fairy Queen & the Shepherd

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by
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The Pond

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The Fairy Pool

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TALE ONE COVER
MATT SMITH

the FAIRY QUEEN *and the* SHEPHERD

The assignment was to adapt a story about fairies. Fairies. I think of small supernatural creatures, hiding among trees, causing mischief. So, where to set the story? As a ravenous fan of the Icelandic Sagas, why not Iceland?

There was at least one solid reason for why not Iceland: It turns out that Icelandic folklore doesn't really have fairies. It has álfar or huldufólk--elves. Also, there aren't many trees there.

Undaunted, I read through books of Icelandic folk tales anyway. It became clear that Icelandic elves serve similar functions as fairies in Celtic and other European folklore. As far as mystical creatures go, they're essentially synonymous. As for trees, well, who is to say there aren't vast forests in the hidden realms?

The tale that stuck out to me concerned an unnamed shepherd and a farm troubled by a mysterious menace. The personality of the shepherd and the story of the troubled farm had significant echoes in one of the most interesting of the Icelandic Sagas, the saga of Grettir the Strong. And so the angle of my adaptation presented itself--retelling the tale of Hild, Queen of the Elves as if it were a "lost" piece of the Grettis Saga.

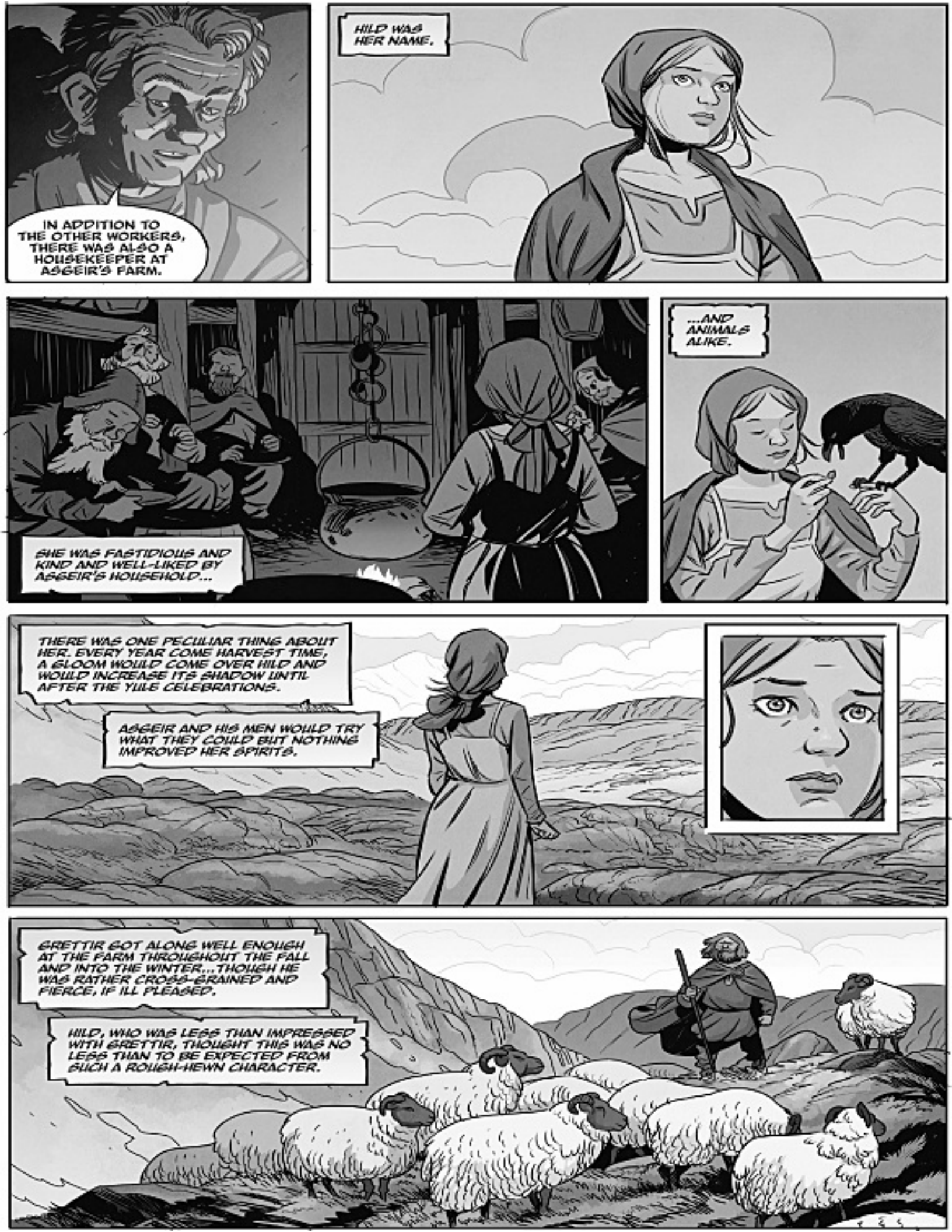
To this end I received a good deal of help from Merrill Kaplan, Associate Professor of Folklore and Scandinavian Studies at The Ohio State University as well as Viking age scholar, Dr. William Short. Many thanks for their generosity of time and expertise, answering my questions about Grettir, Icelandic elves, and generally helping me to meld the two together. Skal!

– *Matt Smith*

SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
I CAN'T FIND MY BONE. I HAD IT EARLIER AND NOW IT'S GONE.
OH?
COULD BE FAIRIES THAT TOOK IT.
FAIRIES? I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OF THOSE EITHER.
OH, THAT'S NOT SO SURPRISING. YOU'D NEVER SEE ONE IF THEY DIDN'T WANT YOU TO.
SOMETIMES THEY'RE COMPLETELY INVISIBLE AND THEN SOMETIMES THEY'RE HIDDEN RIGHT IN PLAIN SIGHT!
DID I EVER TELL YOU THE STORY OF HILD, QUEEN OF THE ELVES?
ELVES? I THOUGHT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT FAIRIES?

Ah, well now, such creatures go by many names, depending on where the story was told, you understand.
One man's spriggan is another man's sprite or one man's haltija is another man's huldra or...
One man's fairy is another man's elf?
Now you've got it!
It begins with an unexpected visitor at a small farmstead...
Oho. A large man approaches Asgeir's farm.
Do you recognize him?
Others will say I'm no good at recognizing men if that's not Grettir Asmundarson from Bjarg.
Onund Tree-Foot's great grandson?
The same.
Grettir the Strong.
Do you think he could be the one to...
Hush now. Let us say no more for the time being but listen to what transpires between Grettir and Asgeir.

HO, ASGEIR, I HAVE COME LOOKING FOR WORK. HAVE YOU ALREADY TAKEN ON A SHEPHERD FOR THE WINTER?
I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT HOW THINGS GO HERE FOR SHEPHERDS EVERY YEAR DURING YULETIDE.
THEY ARE FOUND LIFELESS JUST OUTSIDE THE FARMHOUSE AND NO CAUSE CAN BE DISCERNED AS TO HOW OR WHY.
I WON'T EMPLOY ANOTHER MAN TO MEET HIS END AT THE HANDS OF FORCES UNSEEN. LET FATE CARE FOR THE SHEEP OR THE SHEEP CARE FOR THEMSELVES.
I HAVE HEARD OF YOUR TROUBLES HERE. I DON'T LET SUCH THINGS CAUSE ME MUCH CONCERN.
I'VE DEALT HARSH TREATMENT TO MEN AND GHOSTS AND HAVE NO FEAR OF CURSES OR THE DARK OF NIGHT.
I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR SHEEP REGARDLESS OF WHAT MISCHIEF IS AFOOT.
I CAN SEE THERE IS LITTLE HOPE OF DISSUADING YOU FROM YOUR INTENTIONS.
I SUSPECT THINGS WILL GO THE SAME DIRECTION AS ALWAYS AND I'LL BE BURYING ANOTHER SHEPHERD AFTER YULE AS MY FARM BECOMES MORE A GRAVEYARD.


IN ADDITION TO THE OTHER WORKERS, THERE WAS ALSO A HOUSEKEEPER AT ASGEIR'S FARM.
HILD WAS HER NAME.
SHE WAS FASTIDIOUS AND KIND AND WELL-LIKED BY ASGEIR'S HOUSEHOLD...
...AND ANIMALS ALIKE.
THERE WAS ONE PECULIAR THING ABOUT HER. EVERY YEAR COME HARVEST TIME, A GLOOM WOULD COME OVER HILD AND WOULD INCREASE ITS SHADOW UNTIL AFTER THE YULE CELEBRATIONS.
ASGEIR AND HIS MEN WOULD TRY WHAT THEY COULD BUT NOTHING IMPROVED HER SPIRITS.
GRETTIR GOT ALONG WELL ENOUGH AT THE FARM THROUGHOUT THE FALL AND INTO THE WINTER...THOUGH HE WAS RATHER CROSS-GRAINED AND FIERCE, IF ILL PLEASED.
HILD, WHO WAS LESS THAN IMPRESSED WITH GRETTIR, THOUGHT THIS WAS NO LESS THAN TO BE EXPECTED FROM SUCH A ROUGH-HEWN CHARACTER.

HARSH WINTER WINDS ANNOUNCED THE YULETIDE DAYS. AS WAS CUSTOMARY AT THAT TIME, ASGEIR AND HIS HOUSEHOLD PREPARED TO ATTEND A FEAST AT THE LOCAL GODI'S HALL.
A WHAT?
A GODI, A LOCAL CHIEFTAIN.
GRETTIR, RIDE WITH US NOW. DO NOT TEND THE SHEEP TONIGHT. IT IS ALWAYS DURING YULETIDE THAT THE SHEPHERD DIES.
HILD WILL BE SAFE ENOUGH IN THE HOUSE. WHATEVER IT IS, GHOUL OR BEAST, IT HAS NOT THE COURAGE TO BREACH THE DWELLINGS OF MEN.
IT LURKS OUT THERE IN THE MOUNTAINS AND WILL COME UPON YOU OUT IN THE COLD NIGHT AIR.
I'LL TEND THE SHEEP AS I'VE DONE SINCE I ARRIVED. WHAT'S MORE, I THINK I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A LOOK AT THIS GHOUL WHICH GIVES YOU SUCH TREMORS.
THEN I THINK THESE WILL BE THE LAST WORDS WE SHARE, GRETTIR ASMUNDARSON.

AND LATER THAT NIGHT, AFTER BRINGING THE SHEEP BACK IN...
A DRINK TO WARM YOUR BONES, GRETTIR. WE WHO STAY TO WORK AT HOME SHOULD HAVE SOME MEASURE OF CHEER TONIGHT.
Hrrrrrrr.
MY INTENTION WAS TO GET MY SWORD AND WANDER BACK OUT TO GIVE THE GHOUL MY YULETIDE GREETINGS.
BUT NOW, IT SEEMS I AM SO DROWSY THAT I CANNOT KEEP MY HEAD STRAIGHT UPON MY NECK.
I DON'T THINK I'D BE FAR FROM THE MARK IF I SAID THE HORN WAS BEWITCHED AND HANDED TO ME BY THE WITCH HERSELF--
--Guh.
thok

NO! HILD? NO!

OH YES! THE HORN WAS BEWITCHED INDEED, WITH MAGIC RUNES CUT IN ITS RIM! GRETTIR COULD NOT MOVE A MUSCLE!

AND SO, ASGEIR WAS WRONG! THE THREAT DID NOT PROWL OUTSIDE IN THE HORRIBLE FORM OF A TROLL OR GHOUL...FROTHING MAW AND ROLLING EYES...BUT CAME FROM WITHIN...

...AND IN THE RATHER LESS HIDEOUS FORM OF HILD.
THIS BRIDLE IS MAGIC. YOU CANNOT BUT RUN AS A HORSE DRIVEN HARD.

MUCH TOO HARD FOR EVEN AN OGRE SUCH AS YOU.

Hngg!

AND SO THEY RODE...
...ACROSS THE ROCKY PLAINS...
Hnnrr!
Gnnf!
...THROUGH FROZEN STREAMS...
SPLASH
SLOSH
...AND UP THE MOUNTAIN SIDE.
HRRN!

HALT!
YOU'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO WAIT HERE FOR MY RETURN. IT WON'T BE SO LONG AND THIS NIGHTMARE WILL BE OVER... FOR YOU.
SHUFF
SHUFF
HILD THEN SPOKE A WORD UNTRANSLATABLE IN THE LANGUAGE OF MEN.
SHE THEN DESCENDED INTO THE MOUNTAIN, SPEAKING THE SAME WORD AS SHE VANISHED FROM SIGHT.
TOK
FROZEN BY THE MAGIC BRIDLE, GRETTIR COULD BARELY TURN HIS HEAD AT THE ENCROACHING SOUND OF FLUTTERING WINGS.
Ho, Grettir.

Rise now, man, there is much to do!
HAARGH!
Listen carefully, Grettir Asmundarson, if you wish to help poor Hild.
IT'S UNLIKELY I WOULD HELP THE WITCH WHO ENSNARED ME. I'M MORE INCLINED TO PUT AN END TO HER DEVILRY.
Hold this stone and move about unseen. Those below do not suffer uninvited guests.
But you must lift the rock. We have no magic for that. And I suspect if you cannot lift it, then no man ever could.
HYUUHAAR!
BIRDS HAVE MORE TO SAY IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY THAN IN OTHERS....

Oho. THINGS ARE RATHER STRANGE HERE AT THE ROOTS OF THE MOUNTAIN.
THE WITCH MOVES WITH PURPOSE. I INTEND TO SEE WHERE SHE IS HEADED.
LIKE A GHOST, GRETTIR MOVED THROUGH THE STRANGE FOREST, INVISIBLE TO ALL EYES.

KEEPING A SAFE DISTANCE, FOR HIS FOOTFALLS STILL CARRIED SOUND, HE FOLLOWED HILD TOWARDS AN IMPOSING HALL OF COLOSSAL PROPORTIONS.
AND THOUGH LOSING SIGHT OF HER AS SHE REACHED ITS ENTRANCE...
...GRETTIR SOON FOUND HIMSELF IN AWE OF ITS CAVERNOUS MAIN HALL. THE INHABITANTS OF WHICH SEEMED TO WAIT IN TENSE SILENCE, EAGERLY WATCHING A RAISED PLATFORM AT THE FAR END.
BUT THE CROWD'S PALPABLE ANTICIPATION PALED NEXT TO THAT OF THE THREE FIGURES UPON THE PLATFORM.
HER MAJESTY, QUEEN HILD!
Hmm!

MOTHER!
HILD.
MY HILD, HOW WE'VE MISSED YOU.
THAT'S ENOUGH!

YOU'VE HAD YOUR REUNION...AND NOW TO THE LAND OF MEN YOU MUST RETURN.
MOTHER, PLEASE! LET HILD STAY AND PUT AN END TO YOUR CURSE.
MY CURSE STANDS AND WILL STAND UNTIL HILD IS DEAD.
THOUGH, NO BLOOD SHALL STAIN MY HANDS. EACH YEAR A SHEPHERD SHE'LL RIDE AND A SHEPHERD WILL DIE.
IT WON'T BE LONG NOW BEFORE THE CAUSE OF THE DEATHS IS LEARNED AMONG MEN. AND THAT WILL BE HER DOOM.
IF ONLY HUMAN LIPS COULD TELL OF YOUR PLIGHT, AND HAVE PROOF OF IT BESIDES, THEN THE CURSE COULD BE BROKEN.
BUT NO MAN HAS EVER WALKED THE LOWER PATHS TO THE REALM OF THE ELVES.
BUT PERHAPS SUCH A MAN IS HERE NOW? NO? I DON'T SEE ONE! IT'S A TERRIBLE SHAME.
Hrmm.

POOR HILD! WHY IS THE KING'S MOTHER SO HORRIBLY MEAN?
HER SON, THE KING, HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HILD, AN ELF NOT BORN OF ROYALTY.
AS KIND AND NOBLE AS HILD WAS, THE KING'S MOTHER SAW HER ONLY AS AN ELF OF LOW BIRTH. AND CERTAINLY NOT NEARLY A GOOD ENOUGH MATCH FOR THE KING OF THE ELVES!
SHE DEMANDED HILD BE SENT AWAY AND THAT THE KING NEVER SPEAK TO HER AGAIN.
BUT THE KING LOVED HER WITH ALL HIS HEART AND IGNORING HIS MOTHER'S DEMANDS, HE MARRIED HER.
THE KING'S MOTHER WAS A POWERFUL SORCERESS, HOWEVER. AND WAS DETERMINED TO SEE THAT THE KING AND THE QUEEN FOUND NO HAPPINESS IN THEIR MARRIAGE.
SO SHE PLACED HER CURSE ON HILD. AND THIS WAS THOUGHT THE CRUELEST THING EVER DONE IN THE ELF LANDS.

AND SO QUEEN HILD LEFT HER FAMILY ONCE AGAIN TO RETURN TO THE WORLD ABOVE.

EACH STEP AWAY FROM HER FAMILY A PAINFUL STAB INTO HER BREAST.

YET FOR HILD, THE NIGHT'S SORROWS WERE NOT AT AN END.

FOR THE CURSE DEMANDED THAT THERE WAS STILL A LIFE TO TAKE.

HALT!

LIE DOWN NOW, GRETTIR, AND SLEEP. THE RIDE IS WEARYING AND YOU WON'T LIKELY RIDE AGAIN.
SNUFF
SNUFF

THOUGH I NEVER WISHED YOU ANY HARM.
SNUFF
SNUFF

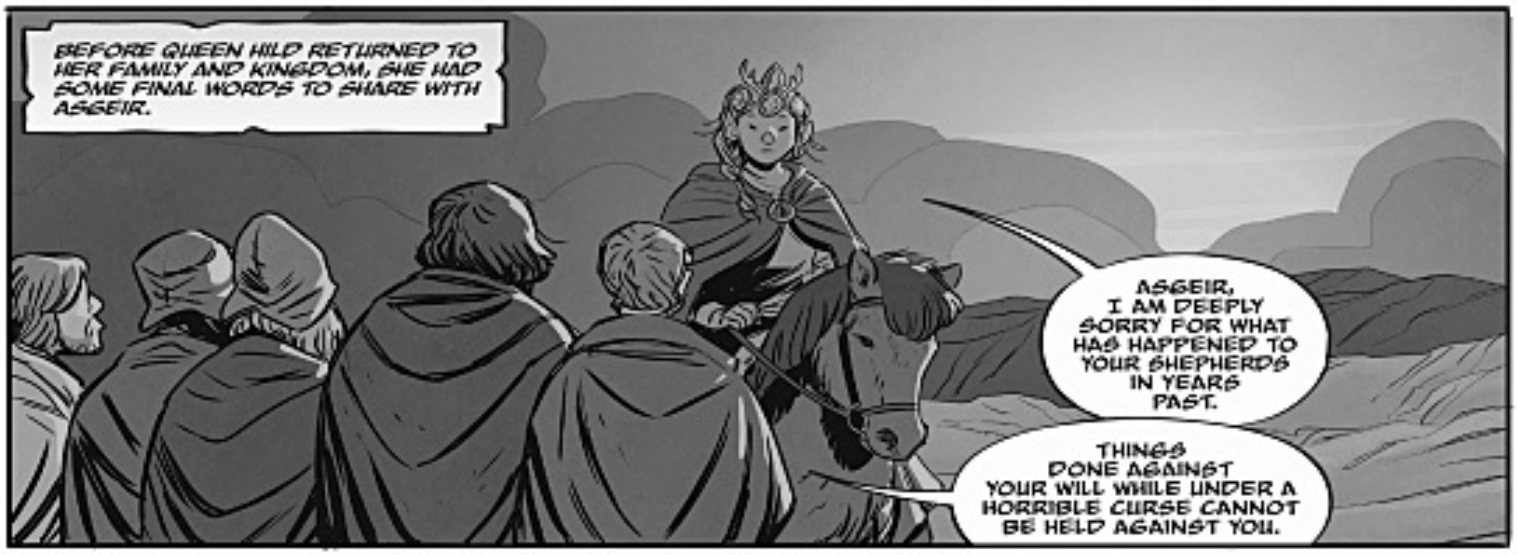
GRETTIR DID SLEEP THEN, FOR THE RIDE TAKEN ITS TOLL.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING ASGEIR AND HIS MEN RETURNED.
HILD, WHAT NEWS HAVE YOU? WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME OF OUR SHEPHERD, GRETTIR?
GRETTIR IS...
ALIVE!
I DON'T THINK THAT'S MUCH OF A THING TO COMMENT ON.
THOUGH YOU LOOK AS IF YOU'VE BEEN WRESTLING WITH WOLVES!
MANY LITTLE THINGS OFTEN HAPPEN AT NIGHT.
TELL ME HOW IT IS YOU HAVE LIVED WHILE ALL OTHERS BEFORE YOU HAVE DIED! DID THE GHOULS NOT COME FOR YOU?

THE HOUSEKEEPER HILD IS THE CAUSE OF THE DEATHS HERE AT YOUR FARM.
WHAT?
LIES!
IT IS SHAMEFUL THAT A TROLL LIKE YOU IS FREELY ALLOWED TO SPOUT LIES ABOUT OTHERS!
YOUR OVERBEARING AND BRUTISH BEHAVIOR IS FOREMOST IN ALL THINGS THAT YOU DO!
AND THEN GRETTIR SPOKE A VERSE.
A HARSH RIDE THROUGH THE DARK NIGHT
THE HOUSEKEEPER'S SPELL-CRAFT PROVIDES.
OVER STONES AND UP MOUNTAIN'S SIDE
IT'S A SMALL WONDER THAT SHEPHERDS SHOULD DIE.
BENEATH FROZEN SOIL
I FOLLOWED THE WOMAN'S STEPS.
STRANGE SHE LOOKED THERE IN HER GOLDEN HALL.
CROWNED WITH GOLD, EARS SHARP AS AN ELF.
*GASP!

WHAT PROOF OF THESE ACCUSATIONS COULD YOU HAVE? I THINK YOU MUST HAVE DRUNK ALL ÆGEIR'S ALE LAST NIGHT AND NOW ARE FILLED WITH WILD AND SLANDEROUS STORIES!
OH, GRETTIR! YOU'VE DONE A THING ALL THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE! YOU ARE THE BRAVEST AND NOBLEST OF MEN!
I THINK I'M MUCH THE SAME PERSON THAT YOU WERE DESCRIBING IN ROUGHER TONES A MOMENT AGO.

IT OCCURRED TO HILD THEN THAT SHE HAD PERHAPS VIEWED GRETTIR NARROW-MINDEDLY FROM THE START. PERHAPS IN WAYS NOT SO VERY DIFFERENT FROM HOW THE KING'S MOTHER HAD VIEWED HER.
AND THIS WAS A THING SHE WAS TO THINK OF MANY TIMES IN THE DAYS AHEAD AS A GOOD QUEEN.


BEFORE QUEEN HILD RETURNED TO HER FAMILY AND KINGDOM, SHE HAD SOME FINAL WORDS TO SHARE WITH ASGEIR.
ASGEIR, I AM DEEPLY SORRY FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOUR SHEPHERDS IN YEARS PAST.
THINGS DONE AGAINST YOUR WILL WHILE UNDER A HORRIBLE CURSE CANNOT BE HELD AGAINST YOU.

AND TO GRETTIR SHE WOULD SHARE A RARE GIFT--THE WISDOM OF HER FAR-SEEING ELF EYES.
THERE IS SOMETHING I WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO YOU, GRETTIR. FOR I AM IN YOUR DEBT. DO NOT TANGLE WITH ANY GHOSTS FOR THE REST OF YOUR DAYS.
IF YOU HEED THESE WORDS, I FORESEE A LONG AND PROSPEROUS LIFE FOR YOU AHEAD.

I THINK I'LL CONTINUE TO DO THINGS IN THE MANNER I'VE ALWAYS DONE AND PAY LITTLE MIND TO THE WORDS OF ELVES.
AH, BUT SOME LEARN FROM EXPERIENCES LESS QUICKLY THAN OTHERS.
SO ENDS THE STORY OF HILD, QUEEN OF THE ELVES.

SO HILD AND THE KING LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER?
WELL, YES, IN FACT THEY DID! WHAT'S MORE HILD HAD A CHEST OF GOLD BROUGHT UP AND LEFT AT ASGEIR'S FARM. NOR DID ASGEIR EVER HAVE TROUBLE WITH SHEPHERDS AGAIN.
AND THE KING'S MOTHER?
POWERFUL MAGIC AND SPITE WAS BOUND INTO HER CURSE. WHEN IT BROKE, SHE BURST INTO FLAMES SO THAT NO BIT OF HER REMAINED.
"AND GRETTIR THE STRONG, WHAT BECAME OF HIM?"
"AH, NOW, THAT'S ANOTHER STORY ALTOGETHER AND QUITE LONG IN THE TELLING.
"HE DID GO ON TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS PEOPLE IN THE LAND...THOUGH HE SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO QUEEN HILD'S ADVICE ABOUT THE GHOSTS!"
HRAR!
OH!
YES, POOR GRETTIR...
IT'S NOT THAT, I'VE FOUND MY BONE!
AH, ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL!
THE END.

TALE TWO COVER

BENJAMIN SCHIPPER

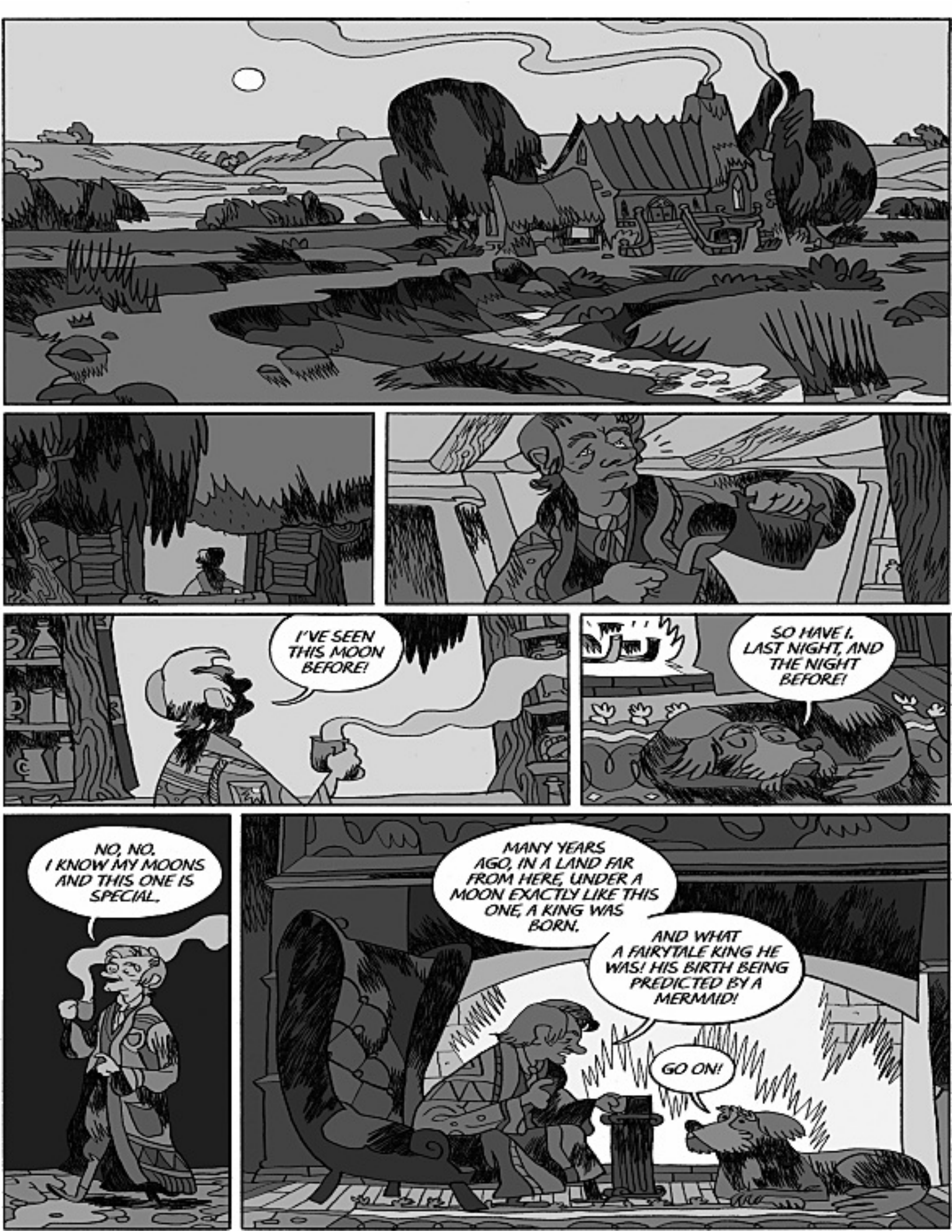
AERIE HILL

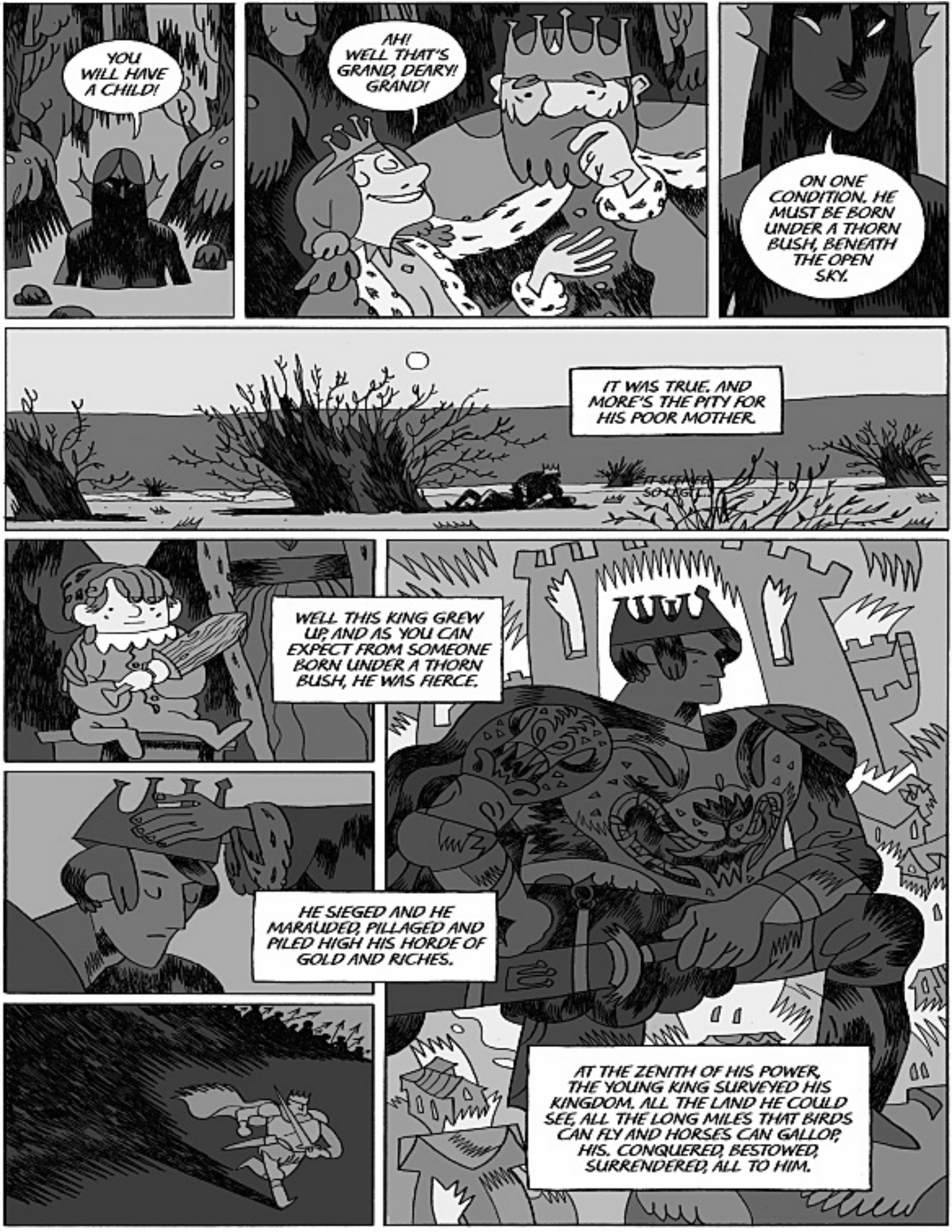
"Faerie Hill," or "Elf Hill," is a Danish tale I found in Scandinavian Stories by Margaret Sperry, a gorgeously illustrated book published in 1971. Its opening line, "He was a fairy-tale king, for his birth had been predicted by a mermaid; and he was born under a thorn bush out under the open sky." was too good to pass up. Like other issues of The Storyteller, I had to narrow down and reconfigure plot and character issues in order to bring a coherent story.

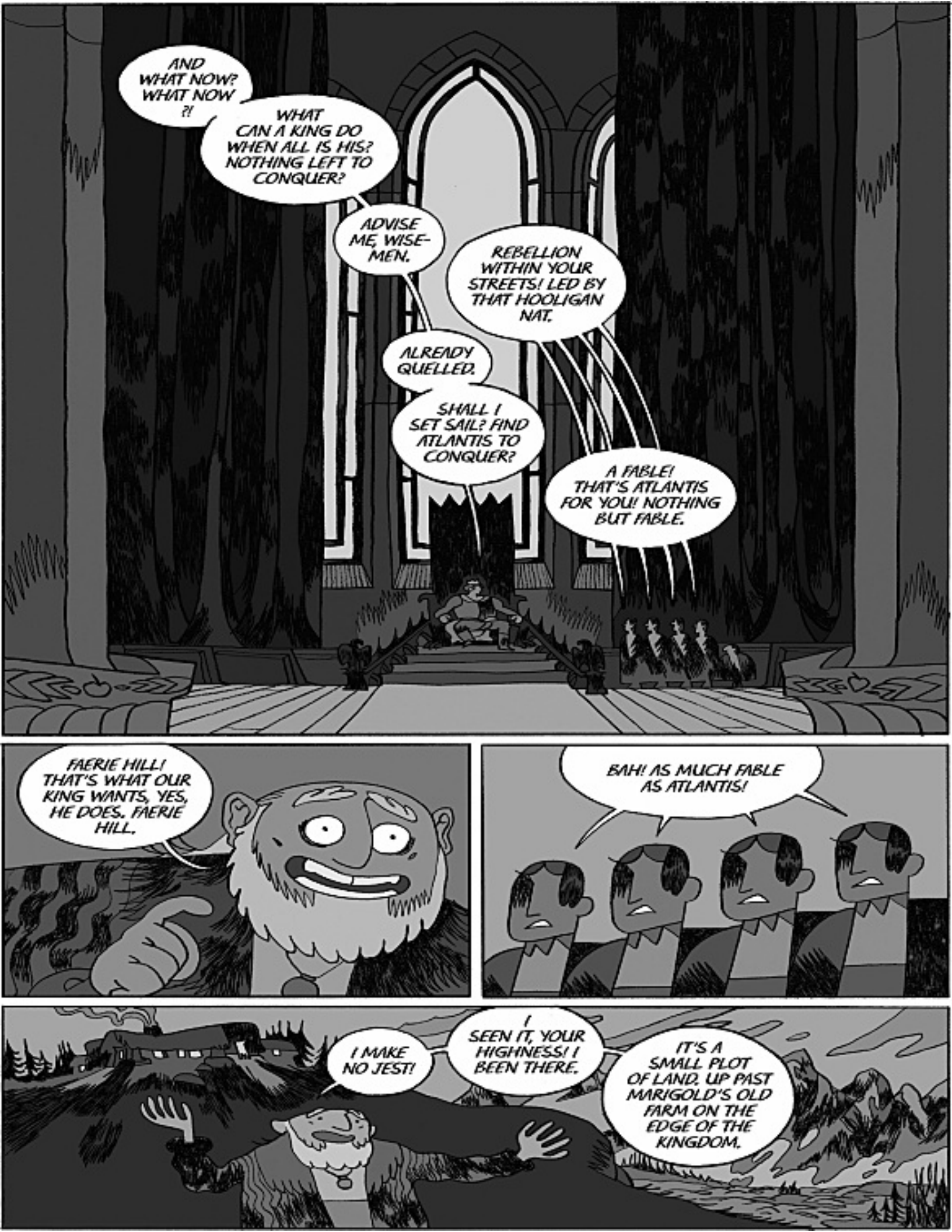
My greatest resource to do so was the original *Storyteller* TV show starring John Hurt. His character and voice were so engaging that I knew I had to pattern my expositive narration after his and feature him as a "through" character instead of merely opening and closing with him.

My biggest takeaway from the original folktale, and folktales in general, is that when we as humans come in contact with imagination, faerie, spirituality, God, or certain other people, we walk away changed for good. I think we all have defining moments in our lives that may seem small to others, irrelevant entirely to some, but leave us quaked, shaken to the core, dead but then reborn. I, like the Storyteller, or indeed as the Storyteller, want to pass this message along. You are living now but there is hope that you may die and in dying grow beyond yourself and into a new creation. Die every day if you have to, but die with a purpose to change for the better.

– *Benjamin Schipper*

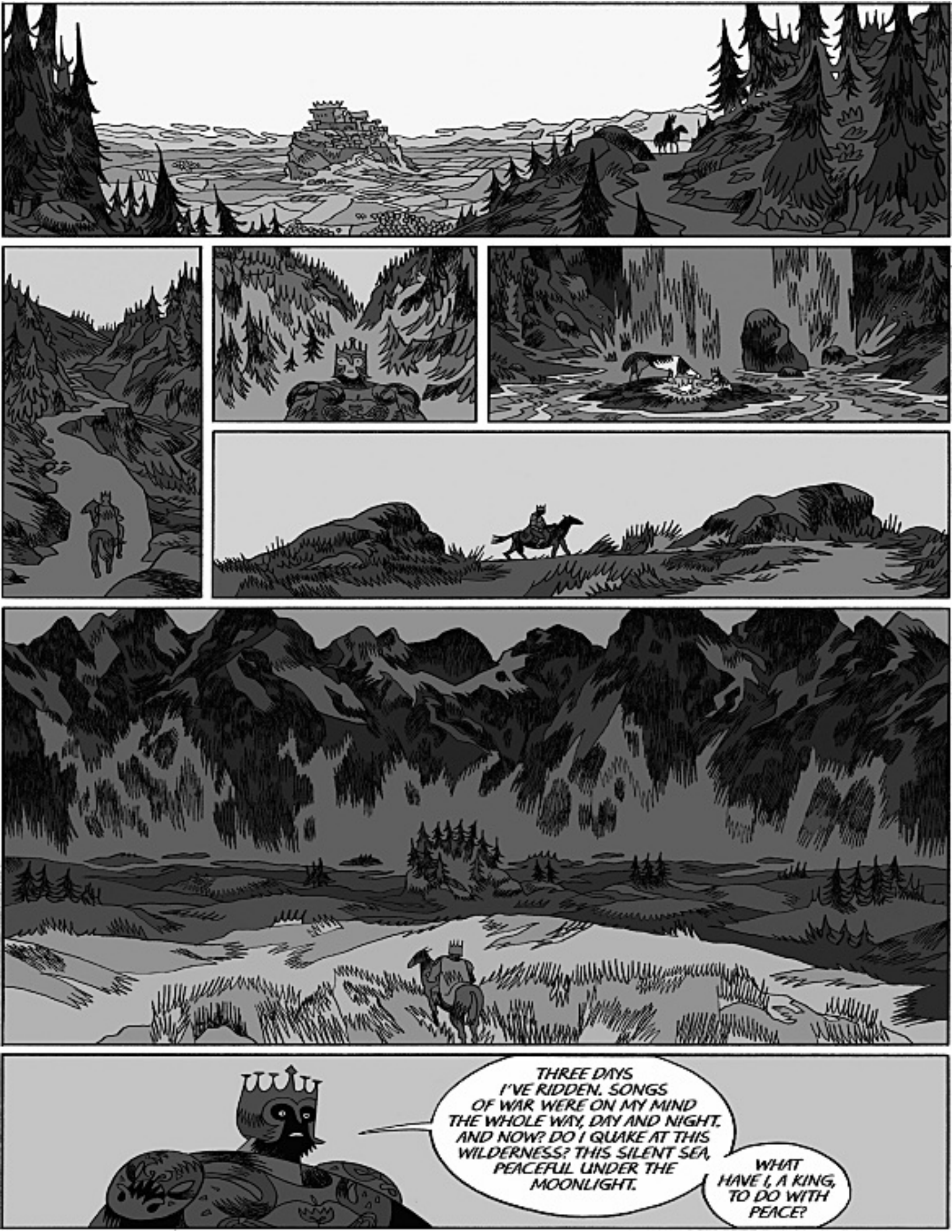

I'VE SEEN THIS MOON BEFORE!
SO HAVE I. LAST NIGHT, AND THE NIGHT BEFORE!
NO, NO. I KNOW MY MOONS AND THIS ONE IS SPECIAL.
MANY YEARS AGO, IN A LAND FAR FROM HERE, UNDER A MOON EXACTLY LIKE THIS ONE, A KING WAS BORN.
AND WHAT A FAIRYTALE KING HE WAS! HIS BIRTH BEING PREDICTED BY A MERMAID!
GO ON!


YOU WILL HAVE A CHILD!
AH! WELL THAT'S GRAND, DEARY! GRAND!
ON ONE CONDITION. HE MUST BE BORN UNDER A THORN BUSH, BENEATH THE OPEN SKY.
IT WAS TRUE. AND MORE'S THE PITY FOR HIS POOR MOTHER.
IT SEEMED SO RIGHT.
WELL THIS KING GREW UP, AND AS YOU CAN EXPECT FROM SOMEONE BORN UNDER A THORN BUSH, HE WAS FIERCE.
HE SIEGED AND HE MARAUDED, PILLAGED AND PILED HIGH HIS HORDE OF GOLD AND RICHES.
AT THE ZENITH OF HIS POWER, THE YOUNG KING SURVEYED HIS KINGDOM. ALL THE LAND HE COULD SEE, ALL THE LONG MILES THAT BIRDS CAN FLY AND HORSES CAN GALLOP, HIS. CONQUERED, BESTOWED, SURRENDERED, ALL TO HIM.


AND WHAT NOW? WHAT NOW ?!
WHAT CAN A KING DO WHEN ALL IS HIS? NOTHING LEFT TO CONQUER?
ADVISE ME, WISE-MEN.
REBELLION WITHIN YOUR STREETS! LED BY THAT HOOLIGAN NAT.
ALREADY QUELLED.
SHALL I SET SAIL? FIND ATLANTIS TO CONQUER?
A FABLE! THAT'S ATLANTIS FOR YOU! NOTHING BUT FABLE.
FAERIE HILL! THAT'S WHAT OUR KING WANTS, YES, HE DOES. FAERIE HILL.
BAH! AS MUCH FABLE AS ATLANTIS!
I MAKE NO JEST!
I SEEN IT, YOUR HIGHNESS! I BEEN THERE.
IT'S A SMALL PLOT OF LAND, UP PAST MARIGOLD'S OLD FARM ON THE EDGE OF THE KINGDOM.

"IT SITS, TEN FOOT BY TEN, OUT UPON THE MISTED MOORS.
"HEATHER AND GNARLED WOOD ADORN ITS CROWN, AND THE MOUNTAINS RISE UP BEHIND IT.
"BUT BE WARNED! A FAERIE QUEEN LIVES THERE. SHE SITS UPON A TWISTED THRONE, AND NO KING MAY CHALLENGE HER."
BAH! FABLES! EVEN SO, IF TRUTH BE IN IT, TEN SQUARE FEET?! NOT ENOUGH GROUND FOR HIS MAJESTY'S OWN STATUE!
HA!
THEY LAUGHED, AND SO DID THE KING. BUT THAT NIGHT, AND ALL NIGHTS AFTER, THE KING TOSSED IN HIS SLEEP, HE TURNED IN HIS MIND, FINDING NO REST.
MINE ALL MINE
T. MINE TO
A KINGDOM WITHIN HIS OWN KINGDOM?! RIDICULOUS! BUT IF TRUE...

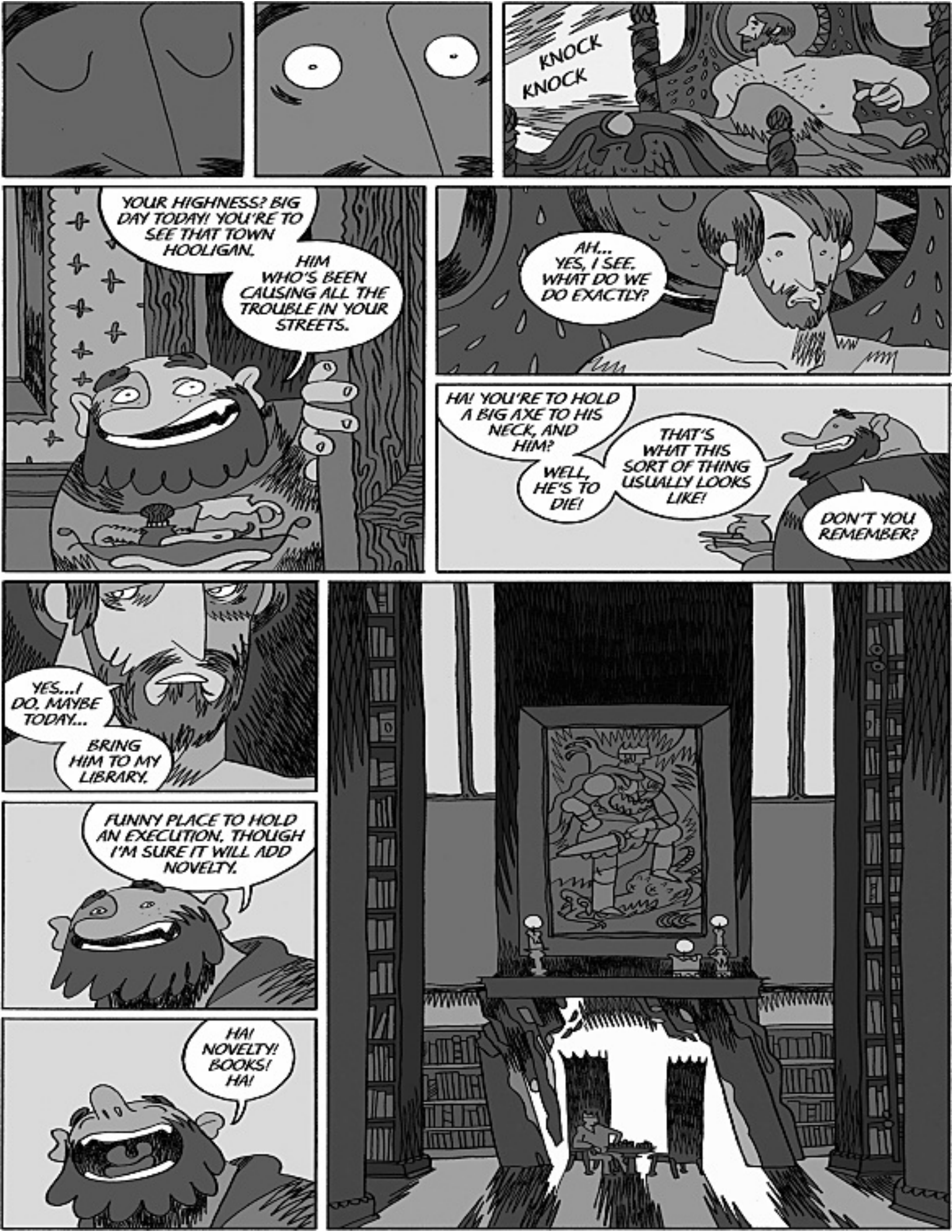
IT COULDN'T BE BORNE. HE MUST FIND OUT.


THREE DAYS I'VE RIDDEN. SONGS OF WAR WERE ON MY MIND THE WHOLE WAY, DAY AND NIGHT. AND NOW? DO I QUAKE AT THIS WILDERNESS? THIS SILENT SEA, PEACEFUL UNDER THE MOONLIGHT.
WHAT HAVE I, A KING, TO DO WITH PEACE?

MY SWORD IS RESTLESS BUT HAS NO BLOOD TO DRINK. AM I ITS DRAUGHT TONIGHT? DID I USE IT TO CONQUER A THOUSAND KINGDOMS? OR DID IT USE ME? IT'S CERTAINLY LEFT ME WITH NOTHING...
HE LOOKED DOWN AT THE HUNGRY BLADE.
NAKED IN THE MOONLIGHT.
AND THEN--!
A BELL!
SOFT.
A WIND,
STRONG.
A DOOR,
NARROW.
A STAIR,
BLACK.

WHAT DOES A KING OF MAN WANT HERE IN FAERIE?

I WANT... I DEMAND THIS LAND. I COME TO CONQUER ...
HE DIDN'T SAY THAT!
OH YES HE DID! BOLD AS BRASS, RIGHT TO THE QUEEN'S FACE.
HE SAID IT, BUT NOT WITH CONVICTION AS YOU MIGHT SUPPOSE. HE SAID IT AS GROWN UP PEOPLE SAY THINGS THEY THINK THEY OUGHT, BUT KNOW THEY DON'T REALLY BELIEVE.
HALF - HEARTED. THAT'S THE WORD FOR IT, AND NO MISTAKE.
CONQUEST YOU SAY? I SAY, YOU SEEK A CHALLENGE. I SAY DEEP IN YOUR HEART, YOU HOPE AGAINST HOPE THAT THERE IS SOME POWER IN THIS WORLD TO MATCH YOU.
KILL ME, TAKE MY KINGDOM, RULE MY LAND, THEN WHAT? THE SWORD? YOUR SWORD IS HUNGRY, IT CARES NOT WHOM IT DEVOURS. BEWARE IT.
I... AM KING. I WIELD IT. I AM ITS MASTER.
YOU SIT ON THRONES, ON ANIMALS. YOU STEP ON PEOPLE, ON SOIL. BUT YOU ARE NO MASTER.
THE MORE YOU RULE THE LESS YOU KNOW.
AS YOUR BODY GROWS, YOUR MIND IS ECLIPSED.
IT SHRINKS WITHIN AND WILL CONTINUE UNTIL ONE DAY YOU WILL BE GONE, ENVELOPED IN YOUR OWN KINGDOM.
YOUR KINGDOM OF NOTHING. NO MOURNERS' CRIES WILL SOUND AT YOUR PASSING. NO SONGS OF LAMENT WILL FOLLOW YOUR CASKET.
UNLESS... YOU RISE TO THE CHALLENGE.
THEN CHALLENGE ME!
I HAVE. AWAKE, THINK. COME BACK TO ME ON THE FOURTH DAY.


KNOCK KNOCK
YOUR HIGHNESS? BIG DAY TODAY! YOU'RE TO SEE THAT TOWN HOOLIGAN.
HIM WHO'S BEEN CAUSING ALL THE TROUBLE IN YOUR STREETS.
AH... YES, I SEE. WHAT DO WE DO EXACTLY?
HA! YOU'RE TO HOLD A BIG AXE TO HIS NECK, AND HIM?
WELL, HE'S TO DIE!
THAT'S WHAT THIS SORT OF THING USUALLY LOOKS LIKE!
DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
YES...I DO. MAYBE TODAY...
BRING HIM TO MY LIBRARY.
FUNNY PLACE TO HOLD AN EXECUTION. THOUGH I'M SURE IT WILL ADD NOVELTY.
HA! NOVELTY! BOOKS! HA!

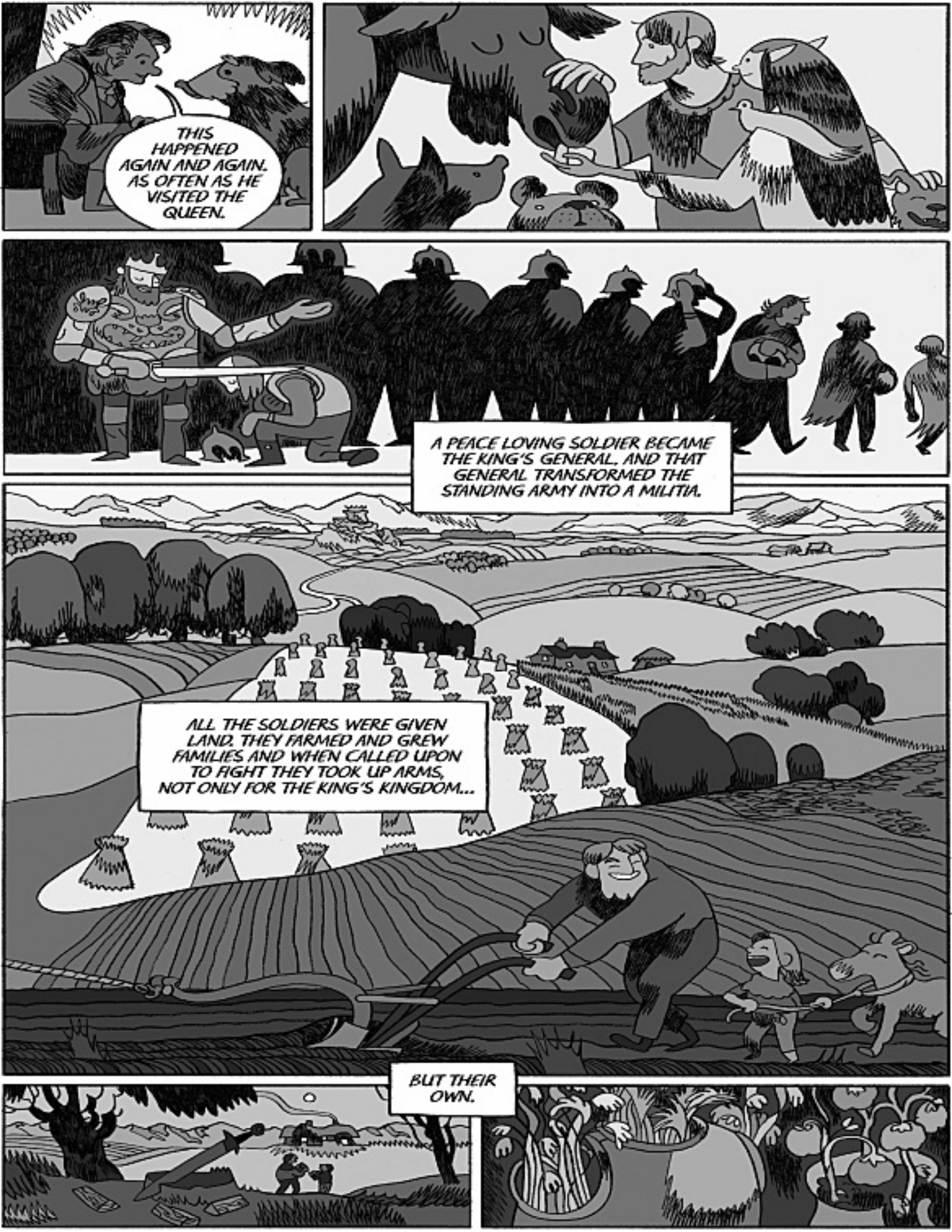
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT I NEED A CHALLENGE.
I'VE ALSO BEEN TOLD THAT YOU, NAT, ARE A MAN OF TRICKS AND GAMES.
SURELY YOU WILL GIVE ME A CHALLENGE TODAY?
NAT RESOLVED IN HIS MIND TO WIN.
THEY WENT AT IT.
FIRST, LIKE HAMMER AND TONGS. THEN, WHEN WELL MATCHED, SLOWER.
THE GAME STRETCHED PAST LUNCH AND DINNER, INTO THE NIGHT, WHEN AT LAST THE KING HAD NOWHERE LEFT TO MOVE.
CHECKMATE.
HA!
HAHA, VERY GOOD! NAT, YOU ARE SMART, YOU ARE BRAVE. YOU ARE MY NEW COURT FINANCIER. DO WELL IN MY ABSENCE AND YOU WILL BE SO FOREVER.

WITH THE CLOSE OF THAT DAY AND THE START OF ANOTHER, HE WAS OFF AGAIN TO FAERIE HILL.
THE KING SHARED EVERYTHING WITH THE QUEEN. THE CHESS MATCH, HIS LOSING AND LAUGHTER INSTEAD OF ANGER.
SHE LAUGHED IN TURN.
AND IT SEEMED TO THE KING THAT IF THE WHOLE WORLD BROKE IN HALF, RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE, ALL IT WOULD TAKE TO MEND WOULD BE ONE LAUGH FROM THAT FAERIE QUEEN.

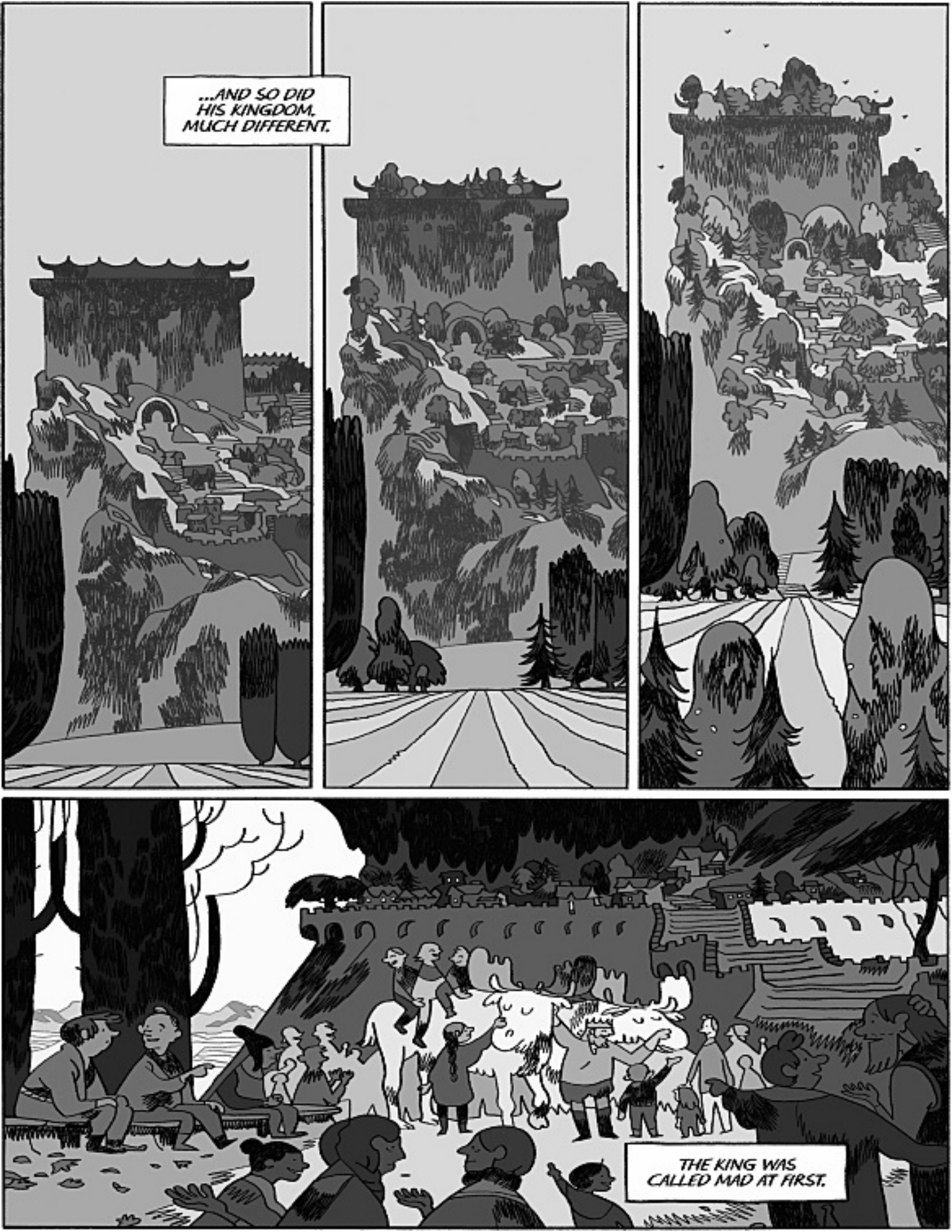
LIFE TEEMED WITHIN HER HALLS. SHE SHOWED HIM EVERYTHING SHE COULD.
HOW DO YOU MAKE THESE CREATURES DO ALL OF THESE WONDERFUL THINGS?
I DON'T!
BUT YOU ARE MASTER HERE. WHO COMMANDS THESE THINGS TO HAPPEN IF NOT YOU?
ALRIGHT! I'LL TELL YOU MY SECRET! COME CLOSER.
I LOVE THEM, AND THEY LOVE ME. WE ARE FRIENDS.

KNOCK KNOCK
YOUR HIGHNESS? BIG DAY TODAY! YOU'RE TO SEE THAT TOWN WITCH.
SHE WHO'S BEEN CAUSING ALL THE TROUBLE IN YOUR COUNTRY.
I EXPECT YOU'LL HAVE A NOOSE OR A BURNING STAKE FOR HER, EH?
THE KING DID HAVE SOMETHING FOR HER: TEA, WITH THE FINEST PASTRIES OF HIS KITCHEN.

HE FOUND THAT SOME OF THE TALK OF HER SPELL WORK WAS TRUE. SHE REALLY COULD MAKE MEDICINE OUT OF PLANTS, HERBS, AND DRIED ANIMAL BONES.
BUT HE ALSO FOUND THAT THE TALK OF HER CHANGING LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS INTO THOSE ANIMALS WAS FALSE.
HAHA! VERY GOOD! YOU ARE SMART, YOU ARE BRAVE. PLEASE, BE MY NEW COURT DOCTOR. DO WELL IN MY ABSENCE AND YOU WILL BE SO FOREVER.
SHE AGREED. AND THEY SHOOK ON IT.


THIS HAPPENED AGAIN AND AGAIN. AS OFTEN AS HE VISITED THE QUEEN.
A PEACE LOVING SOLDIER BECAME THE KING'S GENERAL. AND THAT GENERAL TRANSFORMED THE STANDING ARMY INTO A MILITIA.
ALL THE SOLDIERS WERE GIVEN LAND. THEY FARMED AND GREW FAMILIES AND WHEN CALLED UPON TO FIGHT THEY TOOK UP ARMS, NOT ONLY FOR THE KING'S KINGDOM...
BUT THEIR OWN.

A KIND TOY MAKER BECAME CITY ARCHITECT.
AND ALL OF THOSE SCOFFERS, DESPISERS, AND WHISPERERS WHO SURROUNDED THE KING WERE DISMISSED.
THE KING APPOINTED A NEW COURT AND HE CHOSE NOT FROM THE YOUNG OR THE OLD, BUT FROM THE HUMBLE.
AND IT LOOKED MUCH DIFFERENT...


...AND SO DID HIS KINGDOM. MUCH DIFFERENT.
THE KING WAS CALLED MAD AT FIRST.

HE WAS CALLED MAD AT SECOND.
AND THIRDLY, HE WAS CALLED MAD.
MAD, MAD, MAD!
AND MAD HE WAS! MADLY IN LOVE WITH PEACE, WITH CHARITY, WITH LOVE ITSELF.
HIS FEET WALKED IN FAERIE, AND FAERIE DANCED IN HIS HEART. 'TIL HIS DYING DAY.

AND ON THAT DAY, THE TWO WORLDS CAME TOGETHER. AND THERE WAS SADNESS, AND THERE WAS LAUGHTER.

YOU SEE, A HARD HEART HADN'T BEEN MADE SOFT BUT STRONG, PLIABLE TO REASON. LOVE POURED INTO IT SO LOVE COULD POUR OUT IN TURN.
ONE LIFE HAD BEEN LOST IN THAT FAERIE HILL, AND IN THE DYING THERE WAS REBIRTH. A KING GAVE HIS LIFE TO HIS PEOPLE AND HE GAINED TRUE LIFE IN THE END.
UNDER THAT HILL OUT UPON THE MOORS, UNDER THE MOON AND THE MOUNTAINS, ADORNED WITH HEATHER.

HIS BODY IS GONE NOW. THIS POOR REFLECT-ION REMAINS. BUT THE LOVE SOWN IN HIS SOUL WAS CONTAGIOUS AND IT GREW OUT OF THE GROUND HE WAS PLANTED IN.
THE END.

TALE THREE COVER

TYLER JENKINS

the END

My first inclination, having grown up on images from Brian and Wendy Froud and John Howe, was to create a piece celebrating my love for that type of mythology: European, mysterious, magical, and dark. I love those worlds.

However, sometimes it is very hard to bring yourself into subject matter that you have grown up with. Sometimes it's very hard to craft something unique when the bonds to the originals are so strong. Hence, a shift, to a subject that is so so very different.

But what?! What subject? What world? It was easy actually. The tropical world of Hawaii is so far from anything that I have ever drawn that I couldn't resist the challenge.

It also helps to have a partner in crime that is very familiar with the world of Hawaii, Hilary, who colored the issue, has been to Hawaii many times, and could bring a feel of authenticity to the mood and palette of the colors.

So there you have it: a writer/drawer weaving a tale from a magic he barely understands, and a painter bringing magic itself to the images.

– Tyler Jenkins

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE? FLOWERS?
YES, FROM HAWAII. I GOT THEM A LONG TIME AGO...
THEY LOOK PRETTY FRESH TO ME.
OF THE BREAKING AND REUNITING OF A PEOPLE.
SYMBOLIC OF THEIR FAITH IN SOMETHING GREATER...

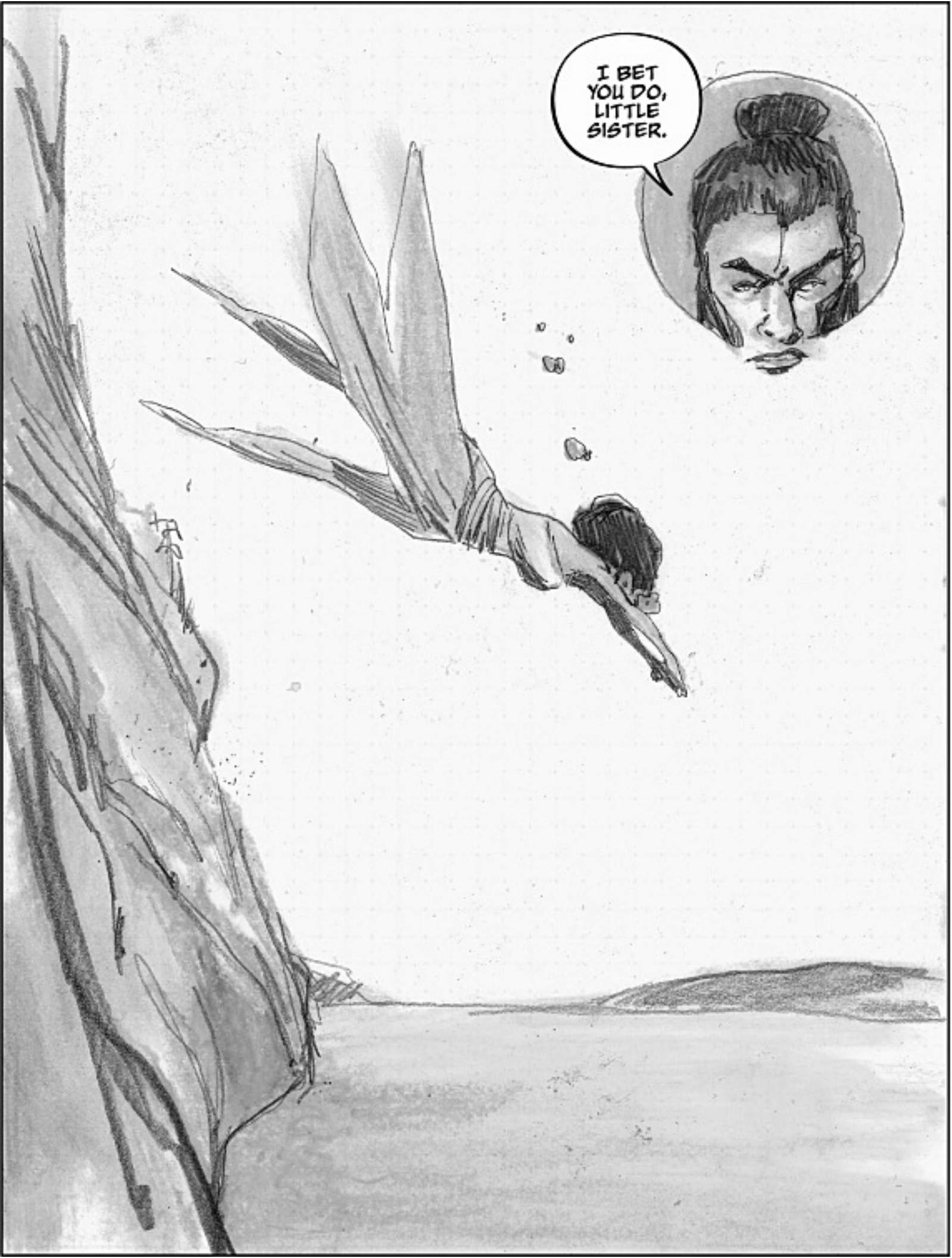
THEY'RE SYMBOLIC, MY FRIEND.
Hmm...
SOMETHING MORE...
...AT SERIOUS RISK.

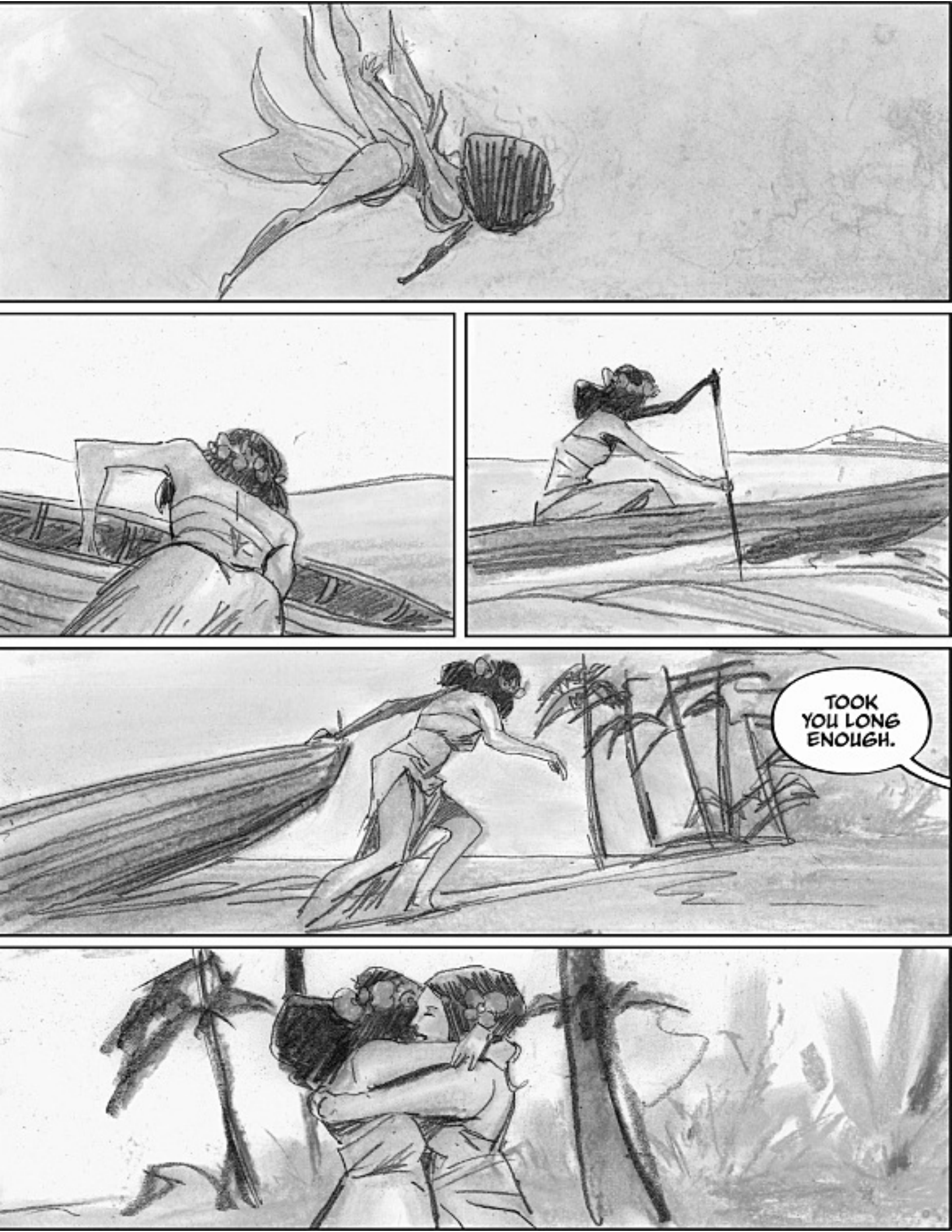
OUR STORY BEGINS WITH OUR HERO WATCHING HER FATHER'S SOLDIERS RETURN FROM WAR, DOWNTRODDEN WITH WHAT SHE ASSUMES IS DEFEAT.
Oh, FATHER.
I AM TIR
OF WATCHIN
ARMY RET
BEATE

DISGUSTING.
I BEG YOUR PARDON, BROTHER?
ED G OUR URN V.
MAYBE IT IS TIME FOR FATHER TO RETIRE...

I AM SAD FOR YOU, PALANI...
SAD YOU ARE SO POISONED...
LOOK AROUND YOU. THIS WAR DRAGS ON...
...OUR COWARD OF A KING... OF A FATHER... WON'T DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE...
...THROWING AWAY THE FORTUNES OF OUR KINGDOM ON A WAR HE COULD END TOMORROW.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IT WOULD BE HARD TO EXPLAIN IT TO YOU, LITTLE SISTER... BUT LET ME TRY...
WHAT IF WE JUST MOVED IN AT NIGHT, TO THEIR HOMES, AND WIPED THEM OUT AS THEY SLEPT?
YOU FIGHT WITH NO HONOR.
I WILL NOT STAY AND LISTEN TO THIS. I HAVE PLACES TO BE.


I BET YOU DO, LITTLE SISTER.


TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH.

I STARTED TO THINK YOU WEREN'T COMING.
OF COURSE I CAME, IOLANA, WHY WOULDN'T I?
Oh, I A
YOU'D BE
YOUR
PREP
FE
A
WE'V
ENOU
BEC
TH
WHAT? MY FATHER CAME BACK SO SAD. THE WHOLE TROOP RETURNED DRAGGING THEIR SPEARS.
I THOUGHT THEY HAD LOST!
NO, THEY WON.
I THINK MY PEOPLE ARE SICK OF THIS WAR, SICK OF FIGHTING AND DYING.

SSUMED
E HELPING
FATHER
PARE A
AST.
FEAST?
E BARELY
IGH FOOD
CAUSE OF
IS WAR.

YOUR FATHER WON A MASSIVE VICTORY YESTERDAY, PUSHED MY FATHER'S WARRIORS COMPLETELY OUT OF THE GROVE.
PUSHED THEM RIGHT OUT OF THE HIGHLANDS ALL TOGETHER, IN FACT.

WE USED TO BE FRIENDS.
WE *ARE* FRIENDS.

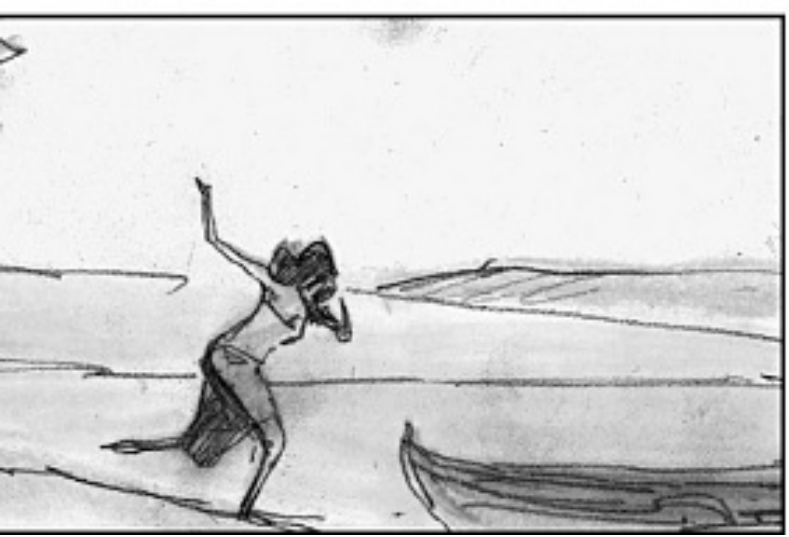
I MEANT OUR *PEOPLE*.
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEANT.

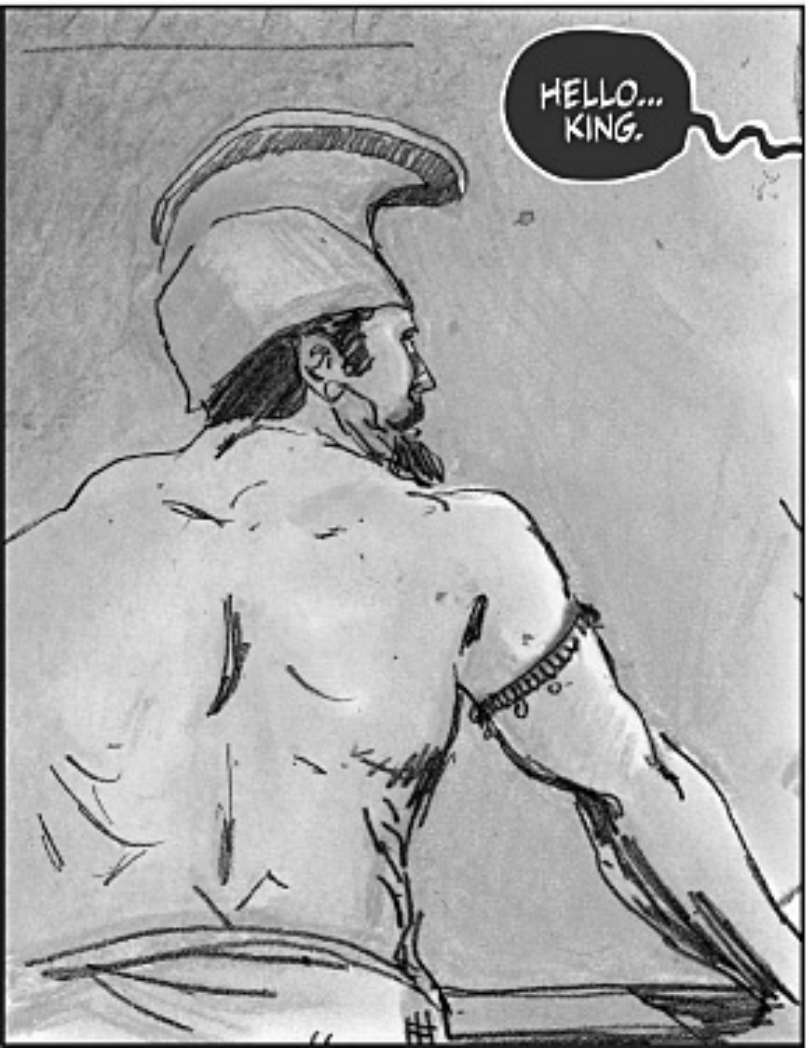
I CANNOT WAIT FOR THE DAY WHEN THIS WAR IS OVER. WHEN OUR FAMILIES CAN SIT TOGETHER AGAIN.
"WHEN WE WERE LITT
YOU REMEMBER..."
"I REM
"
TH
I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN TONIGHT.

...LE.
"
...MEMBER."
...OUR MOTHERS WERE ...HE BEST OF FRIENDS."
"THEIR FAITH COULD HAVE PUT AN END TO THIS WAR."

"THEY COULD HAVE ASKED THE MENEHUNE FOR HELP."
"NOBODY TALKS TO THEM ANYMORE. HOW LONG WILL THIS GO ON?"

SPEAKING OF WHEN... YOU'VE BEEN GONE LONG ENOUGH, YOU SHOULD GO.




HELLO... KING.

YOU...? M-MENEHUNE? YOU C-CANNOT BE REAL.

NO, KING. WE ARE REAL. YOUR WIFE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN US AND SHE WAS RIGHT.

AND IT IS BECAUSE OF THE QUEEN'S FAITH AND KINDNESS TO US THAT WE ARE HERE TODAY.

WE WANT TO HELP YOU. WE WANT TO HELP YOU WIN THIS WAR.
BUT WHY?
THIS WAR IS DESTROYING OUR LANDS.

SOON WE WILL HAVE NO BELIEVERS LEFT TO KEEP OUR SPIRITS ALIVE.

THANK YOU. THANK YOU SO MUCH, YOUR HIGHNESS.

DON'T THANK ME YET, KING. THERE IS ALWAYS A PRICE.
I CANNOT TELL YOU.
BUT ONE DAY, YOU WILL HAVE TO PAY IT, AND ON THAT DAY, WE WILL BOTH KNOW ITS VALUE.
CAN YOU ACCEPT THAT?
THEN TONIGHT, KEEP YOUR PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE NORTH MOUNTAIN SLOPE. MY WORKERS WILL BUILD A POND. A FISH POND.
WITH IT, YOUR PEOPLE AND SOLDIERS WILL ALWAYS BE FED. YOU WILL WIN THE WAR AND BRING PEACE TO THE LAND.

THIS WAR NEEDS TO END. WHAT PRICE MUST I PAY?
I CAN. I MUST.
THIS FISH POND WILL END THIS WAR, BUT LET ME WARN YOU: IF ANY OF YOUR PEOPLE SET EYES ON US AS WE WORK...
THE PUNISHMENT WILL BE FIERCE. AND FINAL.

SCARY, ISN'T HE? SCARY IN HIS POWER... IN HIS PROPHECY.
NOTICE WHAT OUR FAIRY KING SAYS THERE.
ON ONE HAND, HE SAYS KING KEKEO WILL *WIN* THIS WAR.
AND ON THE OTHER, HE SAYS THE WAR WILL *END*.
DOES HE KNOW WHICH WILL BE TRUE?
WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?*
THE MENEHUNE?! FATHER! I SAW NOTHING BUT YOU *KNEELING*, AGAIN.

FATHER, I--
THAT WAS THE KING OF THE MENEHUNE.
THEY HAVE OFFERED TO HELP US, PALANI.
PATHETIC! READYING YOUR NECK, I SUPPOSE.

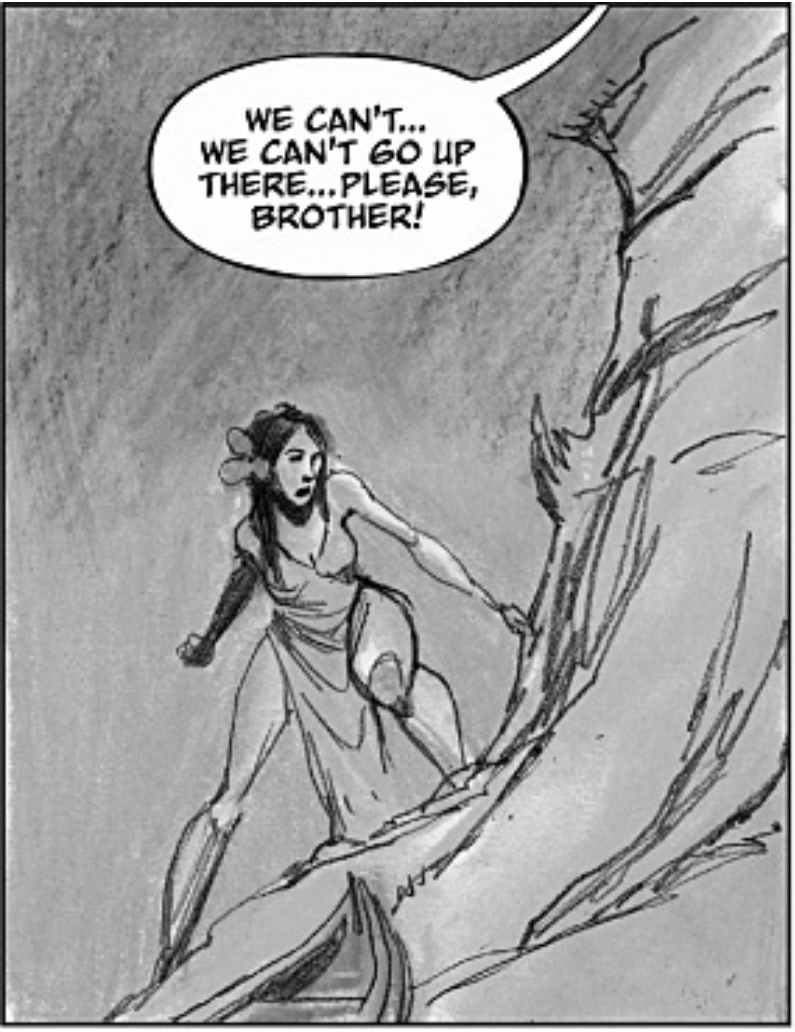
PALANI, YOU MAY MOCK THE OLD GODS BUT YOU WILL OBEY ME.
THE MENEHUNE ARE BUILDING TONIGHT?
YES, THAT IS WHAT HE BELIEVES.

AND YOU WILL STAY AWAY FROM THE NORTH MOUNTAIN SLOPE TONIGHT. THE MENEHUNE MUST WORK UNDISTURBED.
AND YOU AND I ARE GOING TO PROVE WHAT A FOOL HE IS.
I-I CAN'T... I WON'T. I HAVE SOMEWHERE ELSE TO BE.
Oh, I KNOW YOU DO. AND UNLESS YOU WANT FATHER TO KNOW ABOUT THAT LITTLE FRIEND OF YOURS...

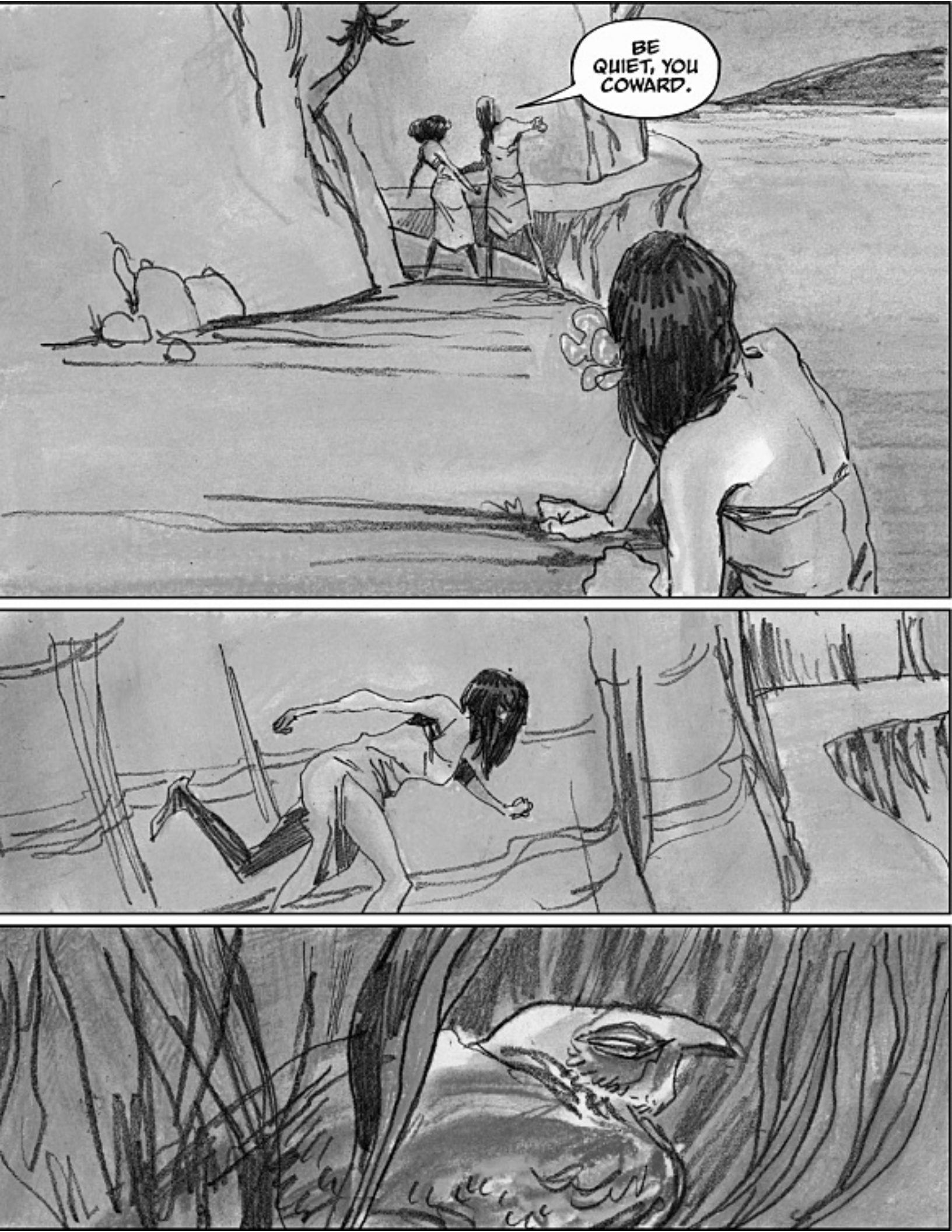
"...YOU AND I WILL BE MAKING A TRIP TONIGHT."

WHE
ARE
WAH

ERE
YOU,
EA?


WE CAN'T... WE CAN'T GO UP THERE...PLEASE, BROTHER!

LET ME GO, YOU HEARD WHAT OUR FATHER SAID!


BE QUIET, YOU COWARD.

Oh...
MY...
YOU HAVE TO LOOK, WAHEA!
FATHER WAS--

CHANCE OF A LIFETIME, SISTER. TO PROVE OUR KING HAS LOST HIS WAY. TO PROVE IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TAKE HIS PLACE.
I CAN'T...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

WAHEA!
UNGH!
YOU MUST SEE!
KEEP THOSE EYES OPEN...

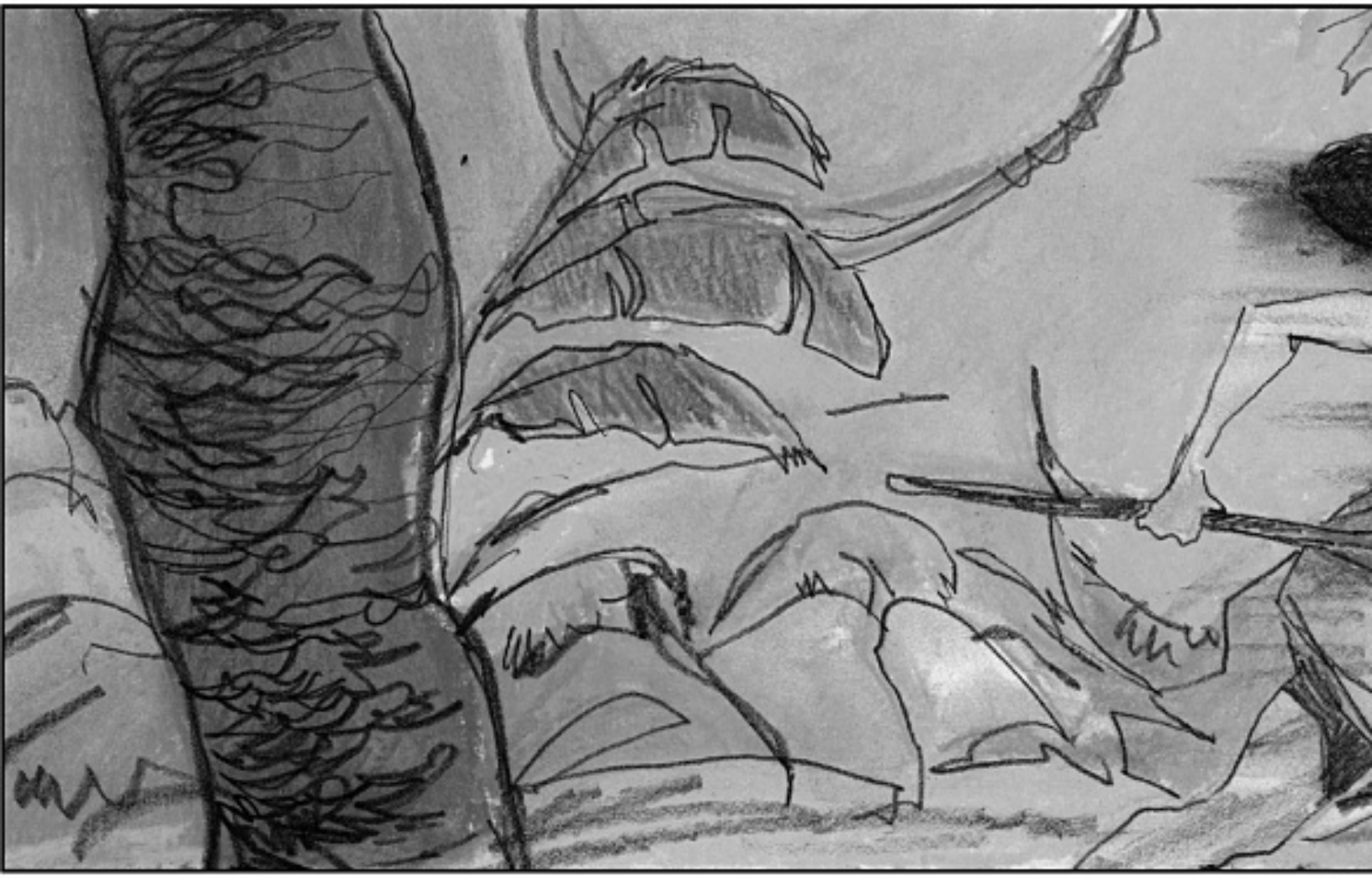
GET UP!
Oh...

R-RUN!
MMM...
BRING ME THOSE CHILDREN.

Unnf!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME, WAHEA... I LOVE YOU, HEART-SISTER.

WHAKK!
OKAY... I SURRENDER...

Hmm.

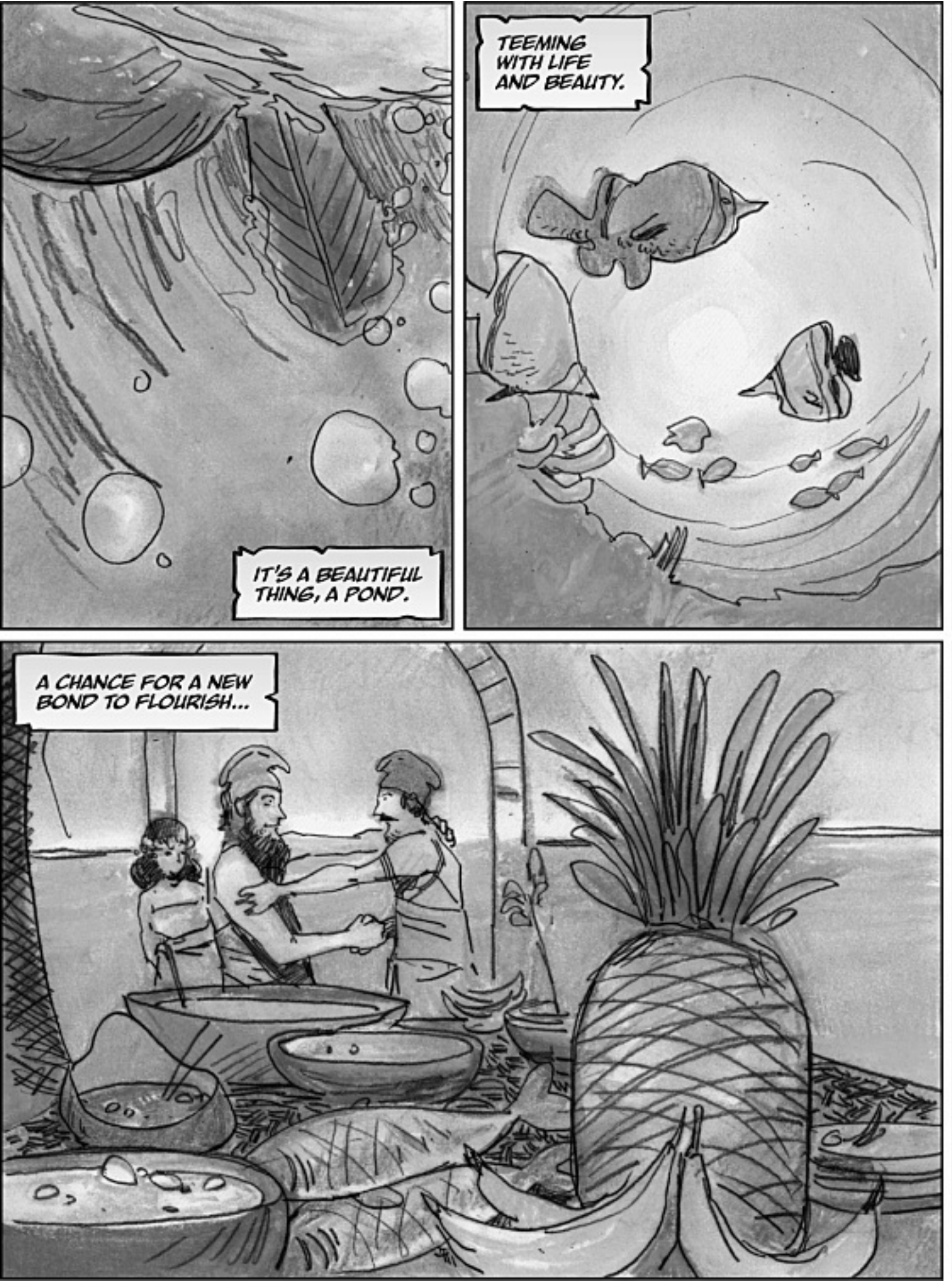


...IOLANA...
NO...

YOU! YOU DID THIS!

SHE WAS MY ONLY FRIEND!
SHE WAS KIND AND GENTLE...

WHY?!
AND BECAUSE OF YOUR BROTHER'S WEAKNESS AND YOUR FRIEND'S STRENGTH...THIS WAR WILL END.
ONE CHILD FROM EACH TRIBE, TAKEN IN SACRIFICE. IT WILL UNITE YOUR PEOPLE. THERE WILL BE NO MORE KILLING.
AND ONCE AGAIN, THOUGH IT BREAKS MY HEART, MY PROPHECY RINGS TRUE. THE FISH POND, THOUGH UNFINISHED IN ITS ORIGINAL INTENT, HAS ENDED THIS WAR.


IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING, A POND.
TEEMING WITH LIFE AND BEAUTY.
A CHANCE FOR A NEW BOND TO FLOURISH...

BUT LIKE THE FLOWER, THIS POND SYMBOLIZES FAR MORE THAN ONE WOULD EXPECT.
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A FRESH START.
...AND A REMINDER OF OLD BONDS, NEVER FORGOTTEN.
THE END.

TALE FOUR COVER
CELIA LOWENTHAL

the FAIRY POOL

In British folklore, there are numerous tales about mortals who find themselves spirited away to Fairyland: Tam Lin, Cherry of Zennor, Jenny Permuen, King Herla, Elidor, Mary Nelson, Oisin--they and a thousand other mortals across the world of folklore all, for better or for worse, paid the fairies a visit in their domain. The inconsistent passage of time between worlds is common among tales of this type: King Herla returned home from a three-day fairy-feast over two hundred years later, watching in horror as his attendants turned to dust the instant they dismounted; Oisin returned to the mortal world after hundreds of years in Tir Nan Og, becoming an old man immediately upon touching the ground; Jenny Permuen spent a blissful year and a day as caretaker to a fairy-lord's son, and then awoke in her own bed at home as if nothing at all had happened.

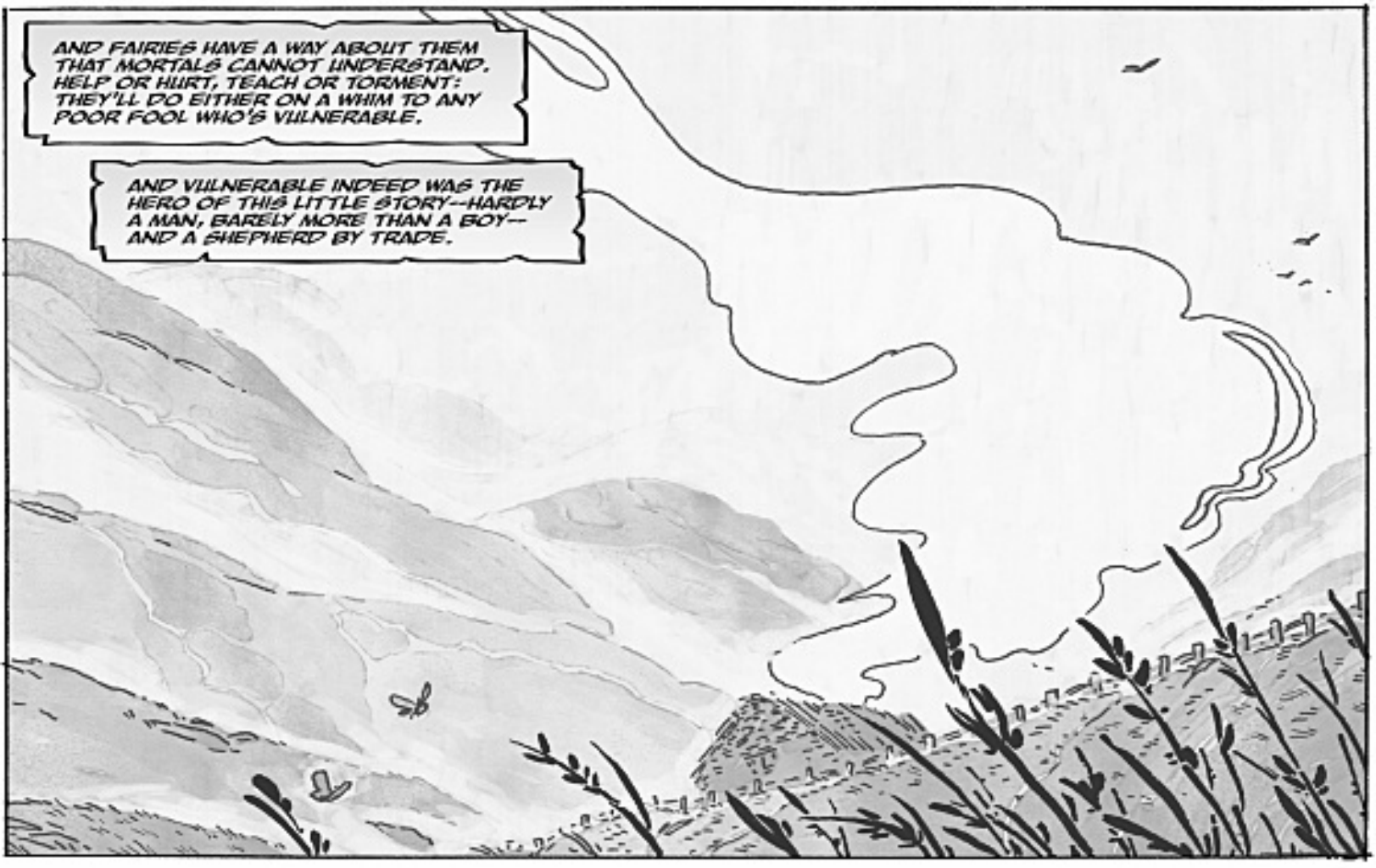
The fairytale depicted in this comic originates from one such story, a Pembrokeshire variant recounted briefly by E.S. Hartland in *The Science of Fairy Tales, an Inquiry into Fairy Mythology*. For the purposes of this comic, I also incorporated some character elements from the tale of Elidor—a little boy who wandered into the Fairyland and played with the fairy-prince, but was expelled after stealing a fairy-trinket for his mortal mother. Unlike many of the other mortals listed above who had the pure misfortune of going to the Fairyland and were cursed because of it, Elidor and Hartland's Shepherd both, in a way, deserved their expulsion from Fairyland. I felt this offered a greater opportunity for a character-driven story, and a stronger didactic element. Otherwise, the focus on the shepherd's arc and his relationship with his mother was mostly my own invention.

– Celia Lowenthal

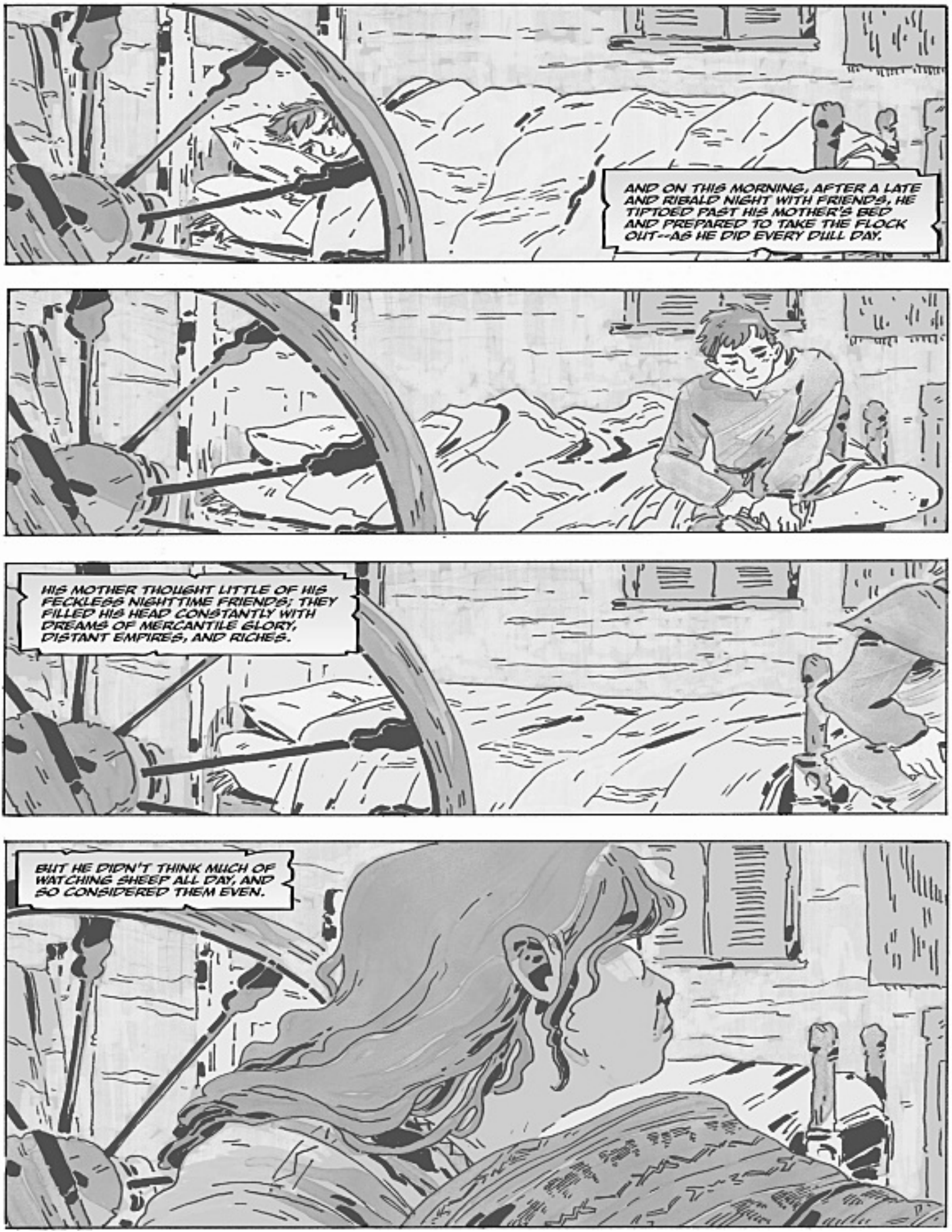
WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT, THE FIRE'S DYING. BE A FRIEND, WON'T YOU, AND FETCH ME THAT POKER?
CAN'T YOU GET IT?
Oh, BUT MY KNEES ARE STIFF. I AM NOT SO YOUNG AS I ONCE WAS.
YES, WELL, WOULDN'T I LOVE TO BE A PUP AGAIN. BUT I'M NOT GETTING UP.
Oh, BOTHER.

YOU KNOW, I KNOW A TALE ABOUT THAT.
ABOUT A MAN WHO WOULDN'T LEAVE HIS CHAIR?
NO, ABOUT A MAN WHO WAS YOUNG TWICE.
HOW LUCKY FOR HIM!
Oh, LUCK HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH THIS ONE, I'M AFRAID.
WHAT DOES, THEN?

FAIRIES, MY FRIEND!


AND FAIRIES HAVE A WAY ABOUT THEM THAT MORTALS CANNOT UNDERSTAND. HELP OR HURT, TEACH OR TORMENT: THEY'LL DO EITHER ON A WHIM TO ANY POOR FOOL WHO'S VULNERABLE.
AND VULNERABLE INDEED WAS THE HERO OF THIS LITTLE STORY--HARDLY A MAN, BARELY MORE THAN A BOY-- AND A SHEPHERD BY TRADE.

IT WAS ON A WARM SUMMER'S MORNING THAT OUR SHEPHERD-LAD'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE FAIRIES BEGAN.


AND ON THIS MORNING, AFTER A LATE AND RIBALD NIGHT WITH FRIENDS, HE TIPTOED PAST HIS MOTHER'S BED AND PREPARED TO TAKE THE FLOCK OUT--AS HE DID EVERY DULL DAY.
HIS MOTHER THOUGHT LITTLE OF HIS FECKLESS NIGHTTIME FRIENDS; THEY FILLED HIS HEAD CONSTANTLY WITH DREAMS OF MERCANTILE GLORY, DISTANT EMPIRES, AND RICHES.
BUT HE DIDN'T THINK MUCH OF WATCHING SHEEP ALL DAY, AND SO CONSIDERED THEM EVEN.

BUT SHE DID NOT AGREE WITH THIS OPINION.

DEAR ME, WAS SHE UNHAPPY WITH HIM. HE WAS NOT THE MASTER OF STEALTH HE'D THOUGHT. HIS MOTHER HAD HEARD HIS RETURN HOME, IN THE WITCHING HOUR'S HEIGHT, THE NIGHT BEFORE.

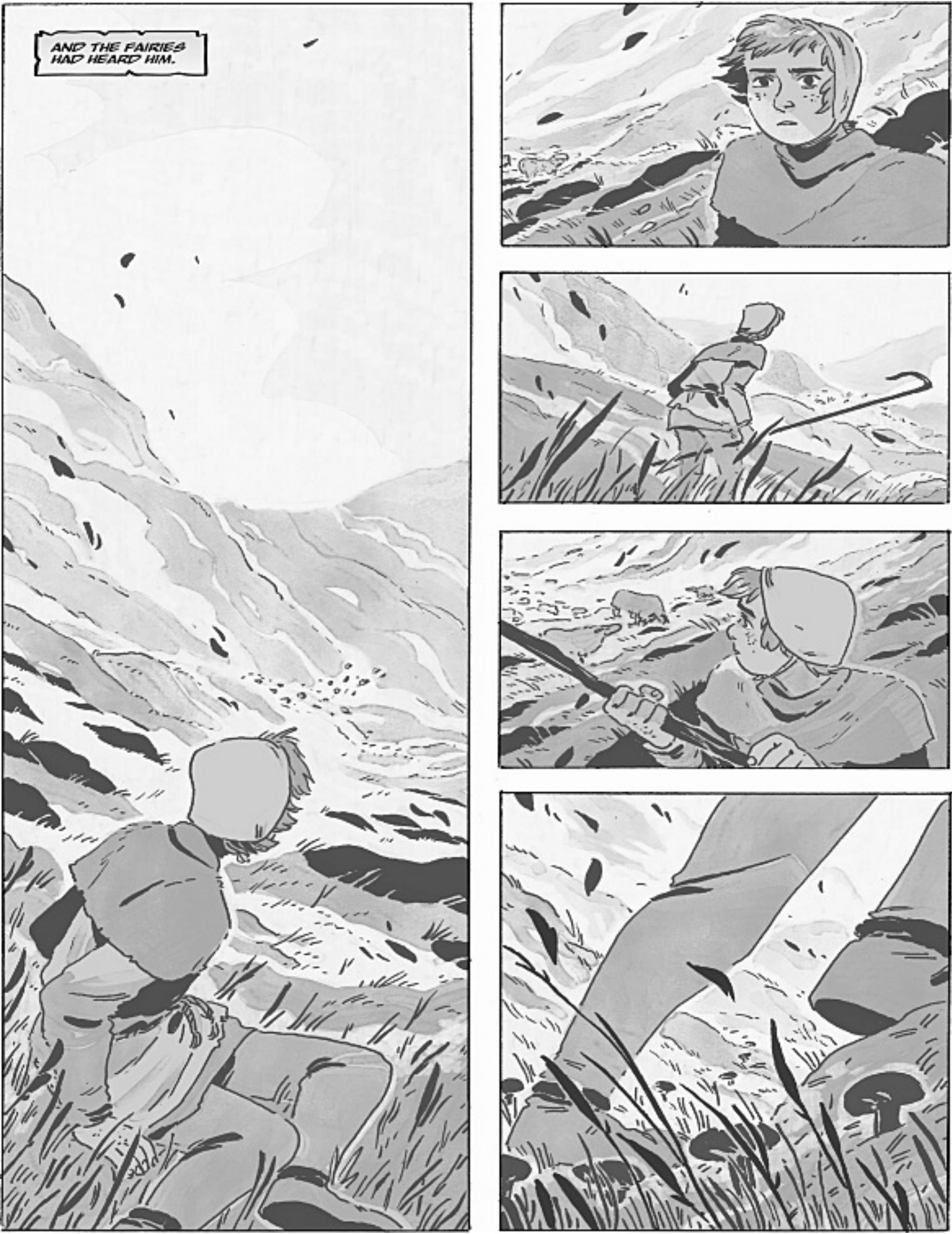
HE'D BEEN DULY CAUGHT.

A HUNDRED TIMES BEFORE, SHE'D REMINDED HIM NOT TO STAY OUT SO LONG AFTER DARK. HE WAS TOO FOOLISH! HE WAS TOO YOUNG!

AND THE SHEPHERD BOY, WITH ALL THE IMPUDENCE OF HIS AGE, SWORE HE'D NOT COME HOME AT ALL, IF THAT'S WHAT SHE THOUGHT.

WITH THAT, HE TOOK THE SHEEP AND STORMED OFF.

HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO DO AS HE LIKED, HE THOUGHT AS HE GLOWERED.
BUT HE WAS ALSO OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW BETTER THAN TO SWEAR AN OATH IN ANGER, AS HE'D DONE.


AND THE FAIRIES HAD HEARD HIM.

THE SHEPHERD-BOY HAD CHANCED UPON ONE OF THE FAIRIES' CLANDESTINE DANCES.
THEIR PETAL-DOUBLETS WERE THE FINEST HE'D EVER SEEN.

THE PRETTY ONES BATTED BE-DEWED EYELASHES AT HIM, AND ENTREATED HIM TO JOIN THEIR REVELS.

AND WHAT YOUNG LAD COULD SAY NO TO THEM?

IT WAS A HEADY AND A DIZZY DANCE THAT THEY DID UPON THAT SLEEPY HILLSIDE.

IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT HIS FAIRY FRIENDS WERE BECOMING VAST AND BEAUTIFUL ON EITHER SIDE.

BUT TO HIS CONSIDERABLE SURPRISE, NOT THREE TIMES HAD THE DANCE COMPLETED ITS CIRCUIT BEFORE HE FOUND...
...THAT HE'D BEEN TRANSPORTED!

HE WAS IN THE MOST MAGNIFICENT OF MINISCULE PALACES; ITS ARCADES ROSE THREE REGAL STORIES ABOVE HIS HEAD. LAVISH SCROLLS, LEAVES, AND BIRDS WERE CARVED INTO EVERY STATELY STONE AND ORNATE ORIFICE.
FOR HE WAS NOW IN FAIRY-LAND, AND IT WAS A MORE SUMPTUOUS PLACE THAN HE COULD HAVE EVER DREAMED TO SEE ON EARTH.

THE FAIRIES, ARISTOCRATIC IN EVERY ASPECT, WERE THE MOST GENEROUS OF HOSTS.

THEY WELCOMED HIM TO THEIR COURT WITH EMBRACING ARMS, PEARLY SMILES, AND FLUTTERING WINGS.

HE WOULD NOW STAY HERE FOREVER, HE WAS TOLD IN ALL KINDNESS, AND IN TIME HE WOULD BE THEIR KING.

AND THE ONLY RESTRAINT THEY PLACED UPON HIM WAS THIS: NEVER TO DRINK THE WATER FROM THE COURTYARD'S GLEAMING FOUNTAIN.
IT--FULL OF GLIMMERING GOLDEN FISHES--COULD GRANT ONE'S GREATEST WISH, THEY SAID; BUT MORTALS MUST NEVER TOUCH IT.
BUT HE, HEARING THEIR GILDED PROMISES OF KINGSHIP AND OPULENCE, COULD THINK OF NOTHING ELSE HE WANTED--AND SO ACCEPTED THE DECREE.
WHAT? WHAT ABOUT HIS MOTHER?!

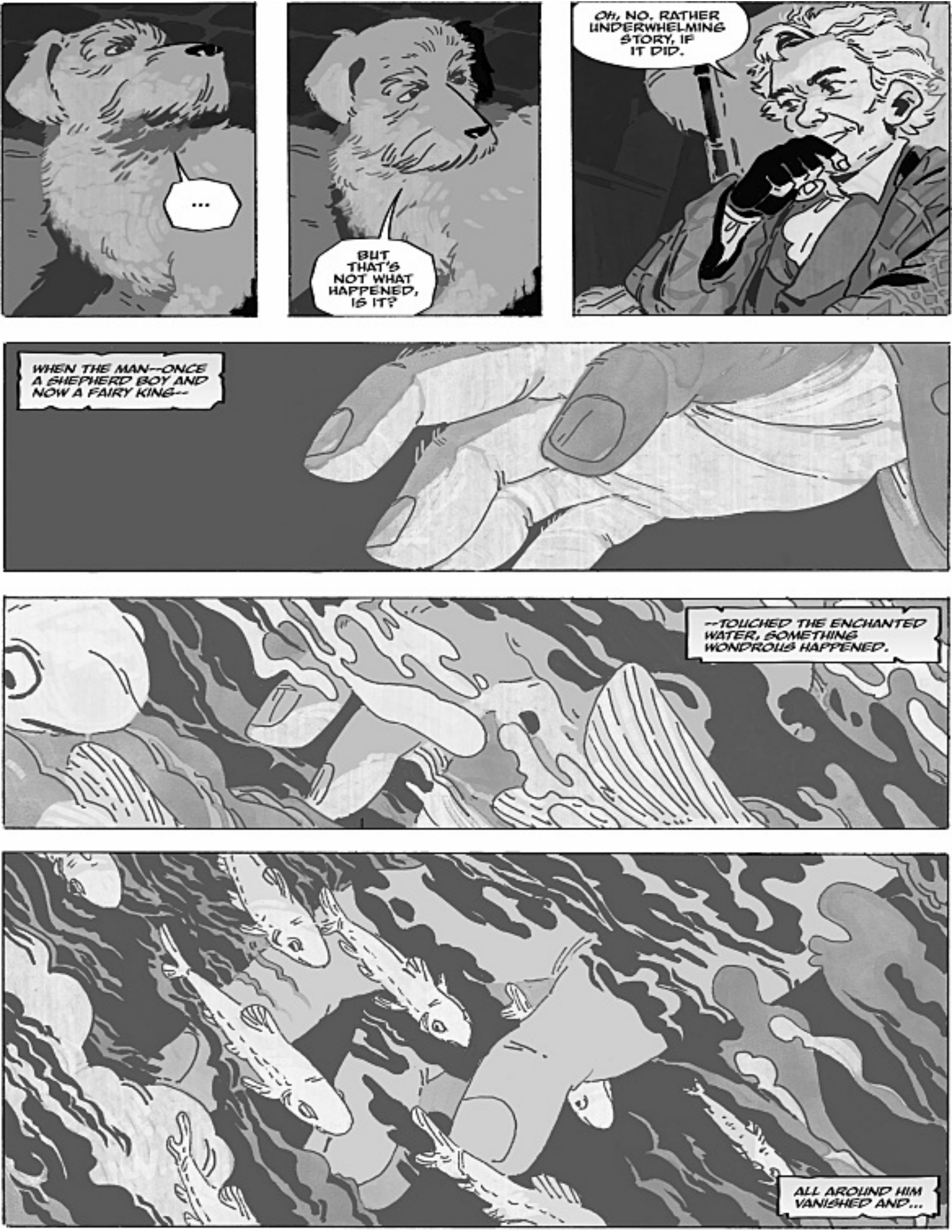
FOR HIM TO JUST ABANDON HER LIKE THAT...HOW TERRIBLE!
INDEED!
THESE YOUNG PEOPLE--SO UNGRATEFUL!
AH, BUT--
--THE SHEPHERD DID NOT STAY YOUNG FOREVER.

HE MEANT HIS DEAR MOTHER NO LASTING HARM, BUT...WELL...
FAIRY-LAND IS A TRICKY PLACE. MORTALS DON'T ALWAYS REMEMBER WHAT OR WHOM THEY MIGHT BE UPON WAKING.
THUS PASSED THE SHEPHERD MANY LUXURIOUS YEARS AMONG THE FAIRIES, WHOLLY UNBOTHERED AND GUILT-FREE.
DECADENT HAD BECOME HIS LIFE, AND VENERABLE SOON HIS YEARS.

BUT AGE AND WISDOM RIDE IN ON THE SAME STEED. THUS, IT WAS AS AN OLD MAN THAT HE--UPON SEEING A COMMON SPINNING WHEEL AND REMEMBERING--REALIZED THE GRAVITY OF HIS ERROR.

HE, WITH DREADFUL GRIEF IN HIS HEART, DREAMT THAT NIGHT OF HIS POOR MOTHER.
SHE, TEARY AND ASHEN, WAS WANDERING THE WORLD IN SEARCH OF HIM.

THUS, IT WAS AS AN OLD MAN THAT HE ROSE IN DESPERATION, AND CREPT TO THE COURTYARD FOUNTAIN.
HE HARBORED AN UNFORMED, SECRET HOPE TO PLACE HIS WISH AND BRING HIS MOTHER HERE, TO MAKE AMENDS--
--IN THE ONLY WAY HE THOUGHT HE COULD, NOW: BY DELIVERING HER FROM THE DESTITUTION HE'D SCORNED.


...
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED, IS IT?
OH, NO. RATHER UNDERWHELMING STORY, IF IT DID.
WHEN THE MAN--ONCE A SHEPHERD BOY AND NOW A FAIRY KING--
--TOUCHED THE ENCHANTED WATER, SOMETHING WONDROUS HAPPENED.
ALL AROUND HIM VANISHED AND...

...HE FOUND HIMSELF ONCE AGAIN ON THE SUNNY HILLSIDE, WITH HIS SHEEP. HE WAS A YOUNG MAN AGAIN.

PERHAPS NO TIME HAD PASSED AT ALL, EXCEPT IN HIS NOW-CHANGED HEART.
NEVER LET IT BE SAID THE FAIRIES AREN'T CONSUMMATE GIFT-GIVERS--WHEN THEY FEEL LIKE IT, OF COURSE!

WHEN HE RUSHED HOME TO HIS MOTHER DEAR, IMAGINE HER SURPRISE!
HE'D NOT BEEN AN HOUR GONE, IN A TOWERING AND INFANTILE ANGER. AND NOW A NEW AND WISER MAN WAS HE!
BUT ONE HUNDRED YEARS AMONG THE FAIRIES CAN TEACH A MAN A FEW THINGS. AND SO LIKE A GOOD AND LOVING SON, HE TOLD HIS MOTHER HE WAS SORRY.

I LIKE THAT ONE. THAT'S A NICE STORY.

I DO, OCCASIONALLY, KNOW ONES WITH HAPPY ENDINGS.

YOU KNOW... I'M SORRY FOR BEING CROSS, BEFORE.

OH! WELL, THAT'S ALRIGHT. I AM TOO.
THE END.

THE MAKING OF

Jim Henson's™ THE STORYTELLER™ Fairies

A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT THE ART AND CRAFT OF THE STORYTELLERS AND THEIR TALES.

With Art and Commentary by

Matt Smith

Benjamin Schipper

Tyler Jenkins

Celia Lowenthal

Tale One Art by Matt Smith

Matt Smith Commentary: In the original tale, the farmer just happens to have a magic stone in his pocket when it comes to this point in the story. This is a charming fairy tale aspect that I didn't think would sit well in my adaption, hence the inclusion of the ravens who bring the stone and their introduction back on Page 2.

Tale One Art by Matt Smith

MS: The goal of this page was to establish the scale of the hall and the placement of the key figures within it so that I could move along to introducing the Queen's family and the nature of the curse in the following pages.

Tale One Art by Matt Smith

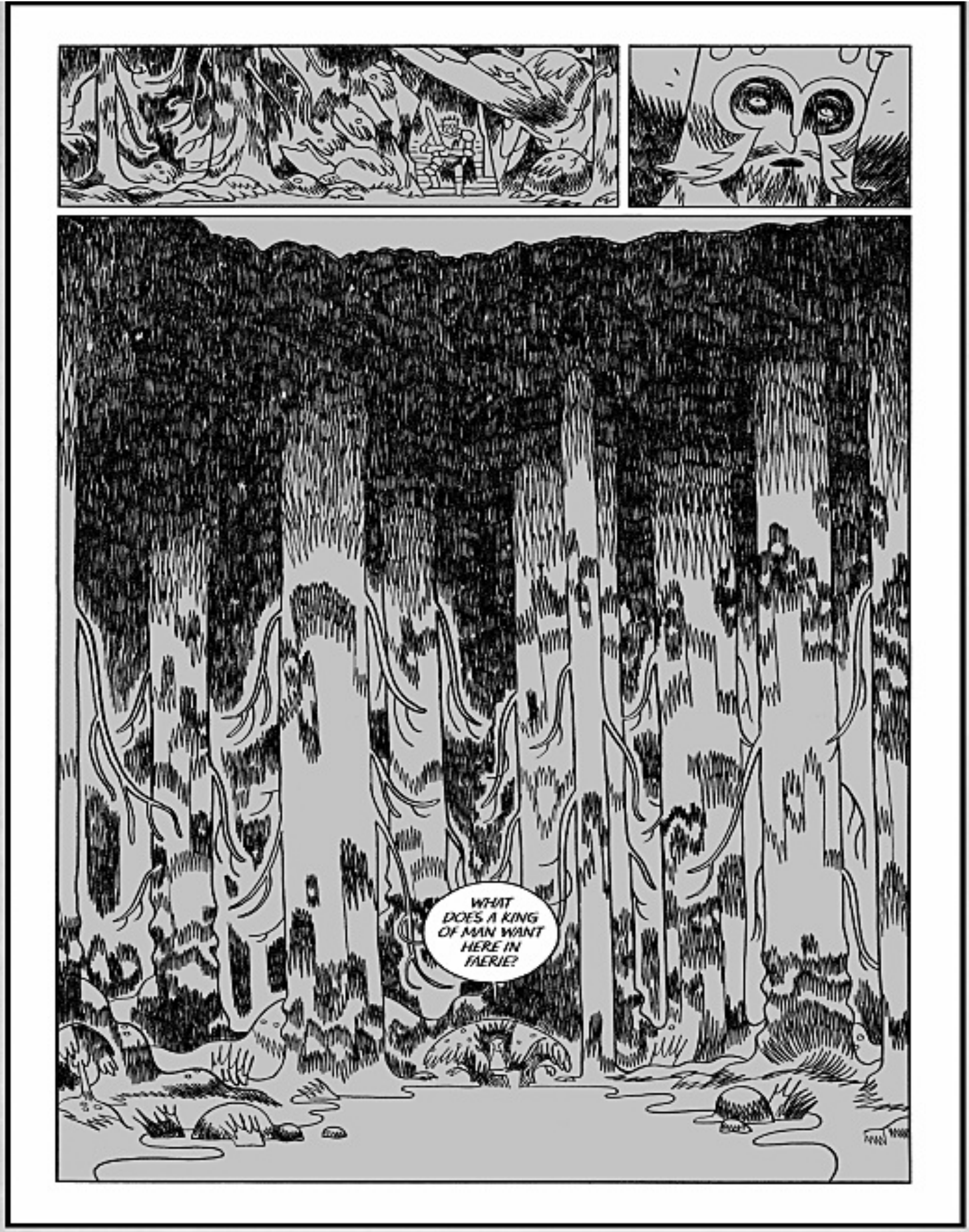
MS: Here's a fairly important page to the story. I wanted to make sure the depth of Hild's love for her family was evident and make equally clear the horribleness of the curse that kept her apart from them.

Tale One Art by Matt Smith

MS: This page was meant to wrap up storylines for the main characters but also allude to future events in the Grettis Saga. Familiarity with the saga is unnecessary to follow this adaption, but I thought it might be fun for those who are familiar with it and even better, possibly inspire those who aren't to check it out.

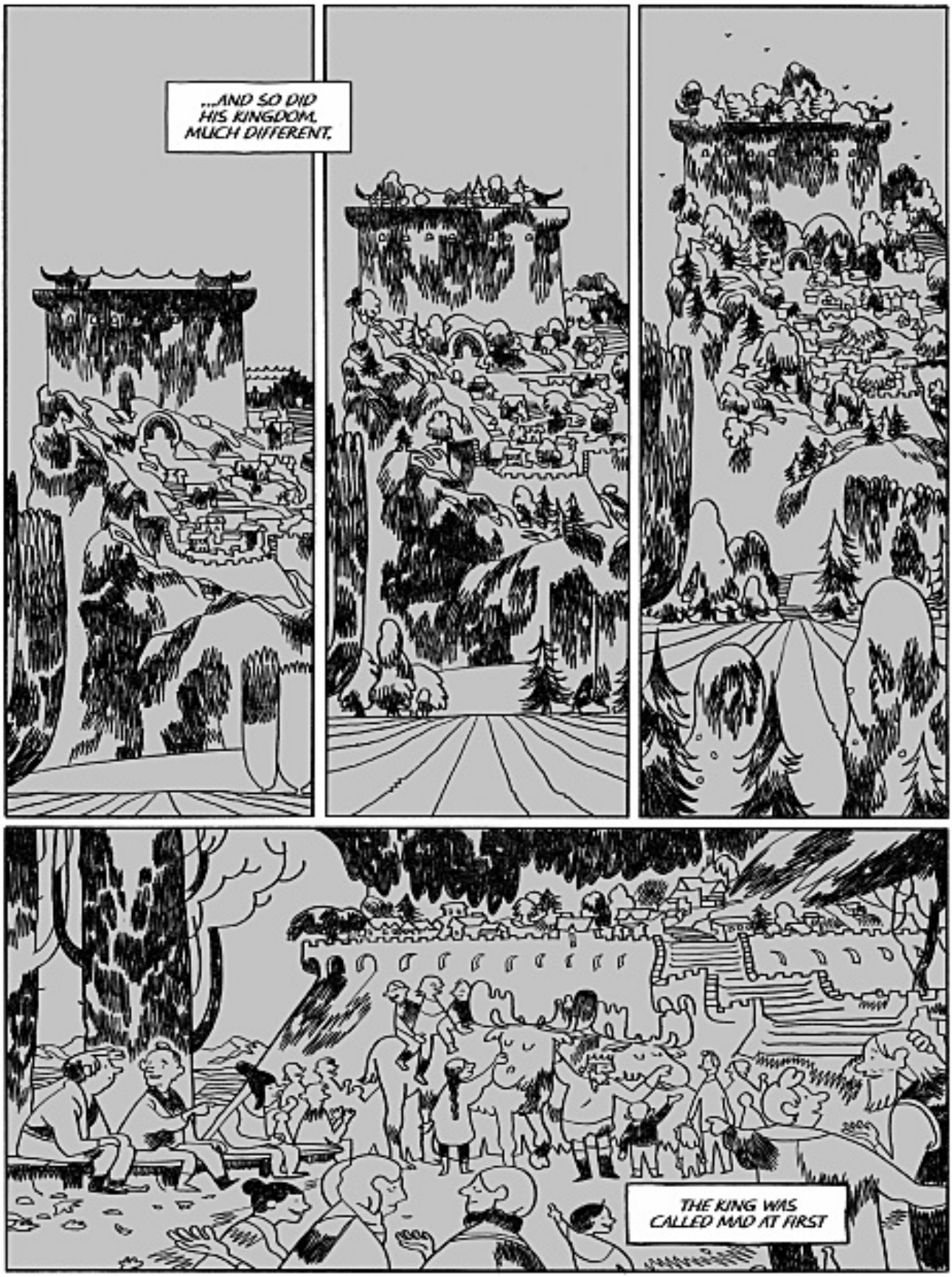
Tale Two Art by Benjamin Schipper

Benjamin Schipper Commentary: This is a page where I really tried to stoke the benefits of narration, the relationship between words and images. I found that while the language could be concrete, the images could be more poetic and symbolic. However, I do think the images can be understood generally without the words, something I like to think of as successful visual storytelling. Hopefully I'm right?



Tale Two Art by Benjamin Schipper

BS: Many times when impact is desired, wild action scenes, lasers, swords, blood, incredible (dare I say "impossible"?) human anatomy, and motion lines are the normal fare. I think movie sound design has much to offer when we consider impact. You've got to pull all the sound out to make stuff really sink in and make a break from clutter. Expanse is impactful, space and margin are peace and that's what I needed for the Faerie Queen's hall. Plus the opposing page is very wordy and crowded.

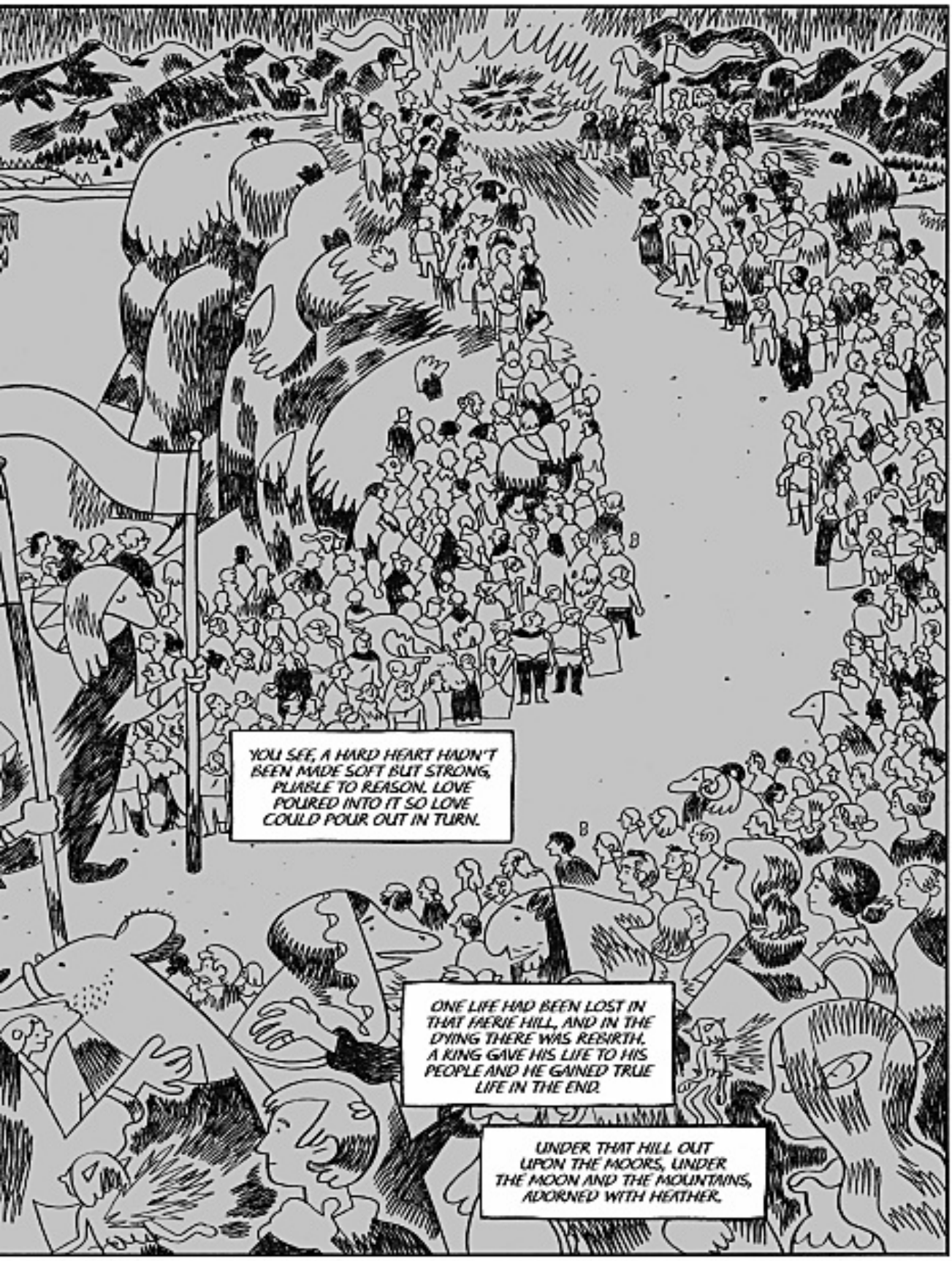


Tale Two Art by Benjamin Schipper

BS: I needed to show tremendous time progression on this one page. I wanted the set of three panels to feel in motion as if a camera was tilting down. As the camera tilts down, time passes, trees grow, the sky becomes clearer and brighter. The fourth panel is fall-ish, leaves on the ground, lights in the distance and the setting sun from the right foreshadowing age and possibly the death to come.

Tale Two Art by Benjamin Schipper

Benjamin Schipper Commentary: Though this spread is just one image I also imply the passage of time from left page to right. On Page 20 the king is in his casket, but on Page 21 he's already being cremated. I know readers will understand, and if they don't then I'm sure they got lost somewhere on Page 2. I'm not a "crowd scene" guy, I don't love



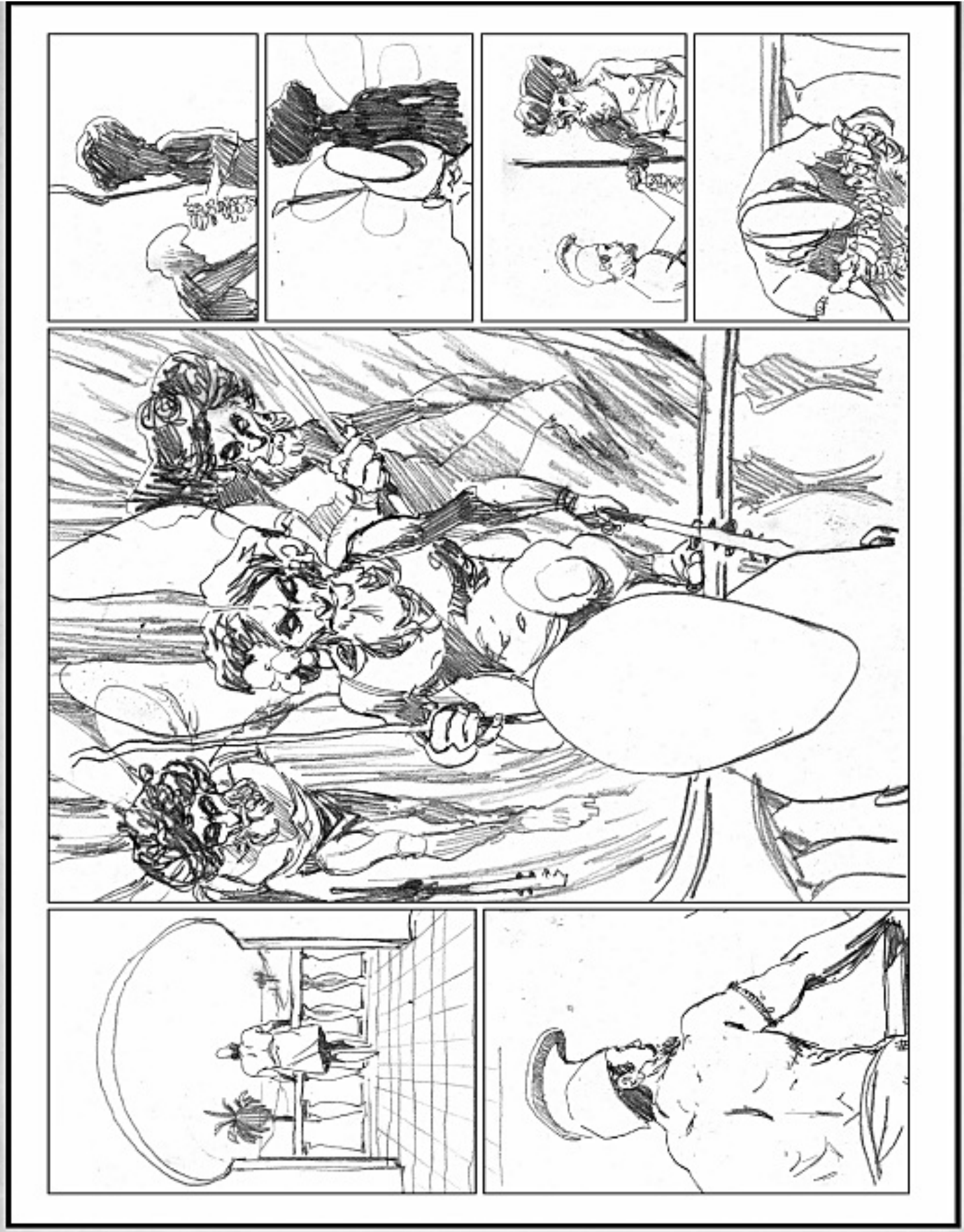
drawing many different people in one image so this was daunting, but I knew I'd like the result. My artistic process involves tracing and more tracing. I make sure I have a good foundational underdrawing so I won't have to erase on the final paper and it looks clean but spontaneous as well.

Tale Three Art by Tyler Jenkins

Tyler Jenkins Commentary: We took a completely different approach on this project. Normally we work in ink and watercolor but here you see us delving into pages that are penciled only, drawn in a loose, alive style and pastels. And what a mess we made.

Tale Three Art by Tyler Jenkins

TJ: The qualities possessed in the materials we used really begin to shine in the delicate and soft depiction of the world of Hawaii. This is a sketch really, a quick glimpse into the lives of these characters.



Tale Three Art by Tyler Jenkins

TJ: The Fairies! I never had any intention except to make them scary. Powerful and scary in their power. Interestingly, their power is a product of their followers' faith, and only through belief can the products of our faith have power over us. That is not necessarily a bad thing but be careful what you believe in.

Tale Three Art by Tyler Jenkins

TJ: We really see the anger of Palani here. He is ruthless and cowardly. And dangerous because of it. It was a challenge to tone down the violence here to a manageable level: anybody who has read my other works will know what I mean!

Tale Four Art by Celia Lowenthal

Celia Lowenthal Commentary: You can hardly see it, but in the first panel there is a chicken-coop just behind the fence. That chicken coop was referenced from an illustration in the *Tacuinum Sanitatis in Medicina*, a 14th-century manuscript on the care of medicinal herbs, vegetables, and livestock organized by season. The amount of time I (and my mother, who got roped into helping me) spent trying to track down the reference picture is grossly out of proportion to the cubic inch of chicken-coop that is visible in this finished art!

Tale Four Art by Celia Lowenthal

CL: This is personally one of my favorite pages. On this page, I arranged the fairies in the first and third panels on the same curve, so that it would seem as if they were fully surrounding the Shepherd and ensnaring him across multiple panels. I also added, on this and a few other pages, a distant castle looming on a misty mountain overhead; the story originates from Wales, and there seems to be a ruined keep on every hill in the Welsh countryside. My personal theory is that these ever-present castles spark the Shepherd's imagination, and have informed his idea of what the Fairy-land looks like when he visits it.

Tale Four Art by Celia Lowenthal

CL: This is another personal favorite page of mine. I really like montages, and I find little slices of scenes are one of my favorite ways to do them. The costumes have been referenced from the *Tacuinum Sanitatis in Medicina* and a few other manuscripts, and the castle exterior visible in the last row is referenced off of Raglan Castle in Wales.

Tale Four Art by Celia Lowenthal

CL: I really like how this page turned out. The Shepherd's costume is referenced off of a gentleman in the *Tacuinum Sanitatis in Medicina*, and the spinning wheel is referenced off of two illustrations--one in the *Luttrell Psalter* and one in the *Smithfield Decretals*, both manuscripts from the 14th century.

Cover Gallery

TALE ONE VARIANT COVER BY

STAN SAKAI

TALES ONE-FOUR SUBSCRIPTION COVERS BY

SAS MILLEDGE

SAKAI

the STORYTELLERS

MATT SMITH lives in the troll-infested suburbs of Boston, Massachusetts with his lovely wife Kathleen and their small wolflet, Jackie. Matt wrote and drew *Barbarian Lord*, a grim and determined love letter to all things Icelandic saga-y and *Conan*-ish. He also fought hideous aliens alongside Nathan Fairbairn in the *Lake of Fire* series for Image Comics.

BENJAMIN SCHIPPER loves to create artwork and illustrations that have sad, spooky, and poignant emotions. He likes people in general, and animals in particular. He lives in New York City with his wife Karen and their little black dog Willow. The majority of his work is traditionally drawn in pencil on marker paper, scanned into Photoshop, and colored there.

TYLER JENKINS is a dude who draws comics, makes art and music, and on occasion barbecues a mean back of ribs. Notable accomplishments include launching the series *Grass Kings* with Matt Kindt and BOOM! Studios. Tyler is also known for creating *Peter Panzerfaust* with Kurtis Wiebe and handling art duties on *Snow Blind* with Ollie Masters and *Neverboy* with Shaun Simon. Tyler lives in rural Alberta, Canada, with his wife, three small child-like creatures, and more gophers than you can shove in a tin pail. Find him at tylerjenkinsprojects on Instagram.

CELIA LOWENTHAL is a comic artist and illustrator with a penchant for drawing patterns and puffy period sleeves. She cites folklore, mythology, and early literature as some of her biggest inspirations. She has a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, received the 2015 Will Eisner Scholarship Award from the Society of Illustrators, and lives in New York.

IT'S NOT THE STORIES YOU TELL,
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